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Late Lord Preſident of the Court of Seſſion.

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A LETTER TO A BISHOP, &c.

MY LORD,

ATHEISM, Deiſm, and the whole train of opinions that attend what is commonly called Freethinking, flow from a ſettled diſbelief and contempt of Revelation.

THIS diſbelief is in a great meaſure owing to the want of a fair and unprejudiced examination of the numerous and various proofs and evidences, that ſupport the truth and authority of the Scriptures.

BUT it is chiefly grounded on a firm perſuaſion, that human underſtanding is a ſufficient guide to man, and the teſt and meaſure of all matters of belief; ſo that we are at liberty, nay indeed bound, to reject whatever does not anſwer thoſe notions, which, by what we call reaſoning, we have fixed.

THAT modern diſcoveries, the fruit of genius and application only, have fixed and determined to a certainty the laws and cauſes of the principal operations, and phænomena of Nature, which were wholly unknown to the antients, and miſtaken by the authors of the books which are received as Revelation.

THAT therefore theſe books, ſo far as they give accounts of Nature, contrary to experience, and demonſtration reſulting from it, are falſe; and conſequently can, in no other point, paſs for infallible.

THAT the Scriptures relate a great many marvellous, improbable, nay incredible tranſactions, which do not ſeem to be directed to any purpoſe, ſuited to ſovereign Wiſdom and Goodneſs; and to contain a world of Inſtitutions, laws, obſervances, and ceremonies, which to Freethinkers appear abſurd, frivolous, and ridiculous; unworthy the ſuppoſed Author, and improper to attain the propoſed end.

WHEN any apparent miſtake in Natural Philoſophy is objected to the Scriptures, the anſwēr commonly given is, in my opinion, ſtronger than the objection, according to the views of the diſputants on either ſide; that theſe things, being incidental only, are ſpoken *ad captum humanum*, and accommodated to the underſtandings of thoſe, to whom they were delivered; though, I confeſs, it would be a much more comfortable anſwer, if it could be ſaid, and proved, that the things objected to are true.

WHEN Freethinkers ground themſelves upon any improbable, or, as they will call it, incredible or abſurd relation, there is no anſwering them without bringing together, and laying before them, the whole evidence that ſerves for ſupporting Revelation; which, when poiſed in the ſcale againſt all objections of this kind that ever have been made, in my opinion, may certainly outweigh them: but, the misfortune is, the objection glares, can be taken in by a very moderate capacity, and requires no learning, and but little attention to comprehend it; whereas, without long ſtudy, great learning, cloſe attention,

tion, and a diſpaſſionate and unprejudiced examination, the evidence for Revelation cannot be collected and weighed. Whoever therefore lets in the ſtrength of the objection, and, for want of learning or attention (not to ſpeak of natural prejudices) either cannot or will not give himſelf the trouble to collect and weigh the proofs on the other ſide, muſt neceſſarily give it againſt Revelation, and fortify himſelf in his incredulity.

And to this it is owing that all thoſe, who, in this indolent and luxurious Age, pretend to politeneſs, and aim at knowledge, and the reputation of underſtanding and ſcience, without any expence of learning or labour, and without any interruption to their pleaſures or purſuits, take up with objections againſt Revelation, without the painful examination of the evidence that ſupports it, look down with contempt on believers, as a parcel of prejudiced Enthuſiaſts, and inliſt themſelves with Freethinkers, as the honeſteſt, wiſeſt ſet of men living.

And when men, carried by pleaſures, or ſunk in indolence, ſettle once upon theſe notions, every inſtitution, ordinance, or ceremony, appointed in Scripture, for which Chriſtians cannot, or do not, aſſign an adequate uſe or end, becomes freſh matter of objection, and tends to rivet and confirm Infidelity.

This facility of receiving and taking up with objections, and the criminal indolence and neglect of thoſe who do not give themſelves the trouble to examine, with due care, the merits of the anſwer, has been long complained of, and lamented by all who wiſh well to mankind, but hitherto in vain: ſomething more than argument muſt intervene to cool them in the purſuit of pleaſures, to rouſe their attention to their real intereſt, and to determine them to ſearch with care

and induſtry, before they will let in ſo much as a ſuſpicion that their objections are ill-founded; or thoſe objections muſt be overthrown by ſome other and ſhorter mean than the complicated evidence for the authority of Revelation, elſe the objectors will never give themſelves the trouble to diſcover their miſtakes.

SOME time ago, as my thoughts were employed in theſe diſagreeable reflections, a ſet of books were ſent me by my bookſeller to look over; the titles were odd and provoked my curioſity: *Moſes's Principia, parts 1ſt and 2d*; *An Eſſay toward a Natural Hiſtory of the Bible: Moſes's—— ſine Principio*; *A new Account of the Confuſion of Tongues, and the Names and Attributes of the Trinity of the Gentiles*; were inſcribed at the head of theſe ſeveral Tracts, all publiſhed ſucceſſively, in different years, from the year 1724: And theſe are followed by another Work, that was publiſhed very lately, entitled, *A Treatiſe of Power, Eſſential and Mechanical.*

RUNNING over theſe books curſorily, I readily perceived the Author propoſed to prove that the *Hebrew* ſcriptures had never been, and are not now, truly tranſlated, or perfectly underſtood by thoſe who pretend to be learned; that, rightly tranſlated and underſtood, they compriſe a perfect ſyſtem of Natural Philoſophy, as well as a complete body of Theology and Religion: that they no where aſſert any of thoſe heterodoxes in philoſophy, which modern obſervations ſhew to be ſuch; but, on the contrary, teach and aver every thing that has been truly gathered from obſervations or experiments, recent or antient; and propoſe, and explain mechanical principles different from, nay in many things diametrically oppoſite to, thoſe now received; by which all the various operations in nature are performed, and which

which tally with, and can be ſupported by, every obſervation and experiment that hath been truly taken and made: that the ſeeming abſurdities, with which the Scriptures are charged, either are not in the original, and are therefore owing to the ignorance or perverſe deſign of the tranſlators; or are, when rightly underſtood, no blemiſhes, but beauties in the Revelation: and that the many inſtitutions, declarations, and obſervances, which appear frivolous to thoſe who do not underſtand them, are the product of perfect Wiſdom and Contrivance, neceſſary to explain and preſerve the religion inculcated in the Old Teſtament, and fit to prepare for that which afterwards was delivered in the New.

But, though I eaſily gathered this to be the Author's propoſal and intention; yet, upon looking into particulars, I found the proofs depended ſo much on the true conſtruction of the *Hebrew* language, to which I was very much a ſtranger; and on an exact knowledge of the experiments and obſervations that have been made on the works of Nature, with which I am but very little acquainted; that his reaſoning, almoſt every where, appeared to me intricate and arbitrary; and I was not without ſome doubts that the obſcurity I complained of proceeded partly from deſign, for reaſons that I could not penetrate.

Finding, from my own want of knowledge, ſuch difficulty in examining the proofs offered to ſupport propoſitions of ſuch univerſal import to mankind, and which I wiſhed ſo earneſtly to diſcover to be concluſive and true; I reſorted to ſeveral learned men of my acquaintance, ſkilled in the antient language, on which the Author grounds himſelf; and converſant in the obſervations and experiments, on which the modern phi-

loſophy of Nature is built, not doubting but they had conſidered, and framed a certain judgment of his works: but, to my great ſurpriſe, though all of them had heard of, and ſeen ſome part of thoſe tracts, yet not one of them had given himſelf the trouble to examine them. They complained of the intricacy and abſtruſeneſs of the Author's way of writing, and concluded him ſo, certainly, to be half-learned, viſionary, and in the wrong, becauſe his notions were contradictory to what they, by long ſtudy, had adopted and made their own; that they laid aſide his books without any farther enquiry, as what did not deſerve, or would not anſwer the trouble of an examination.

THOUGH I could have relied on theſe gentlemen's judgment, if they had conſidered the Author's opinions and arguments with any care; yet, finding that they had cenſured without examination, and not being able to meet with any perſon whatever, who had given himſelf the trouble of canvaſſing with due attention his arguments, on a matter of ſo general concern; I rubbed up the little *Hebrew* I had, and addreſſed myſelf to a more careful peruſal of the books; not with any hopes of being able finally to judge of the certainty of his ſuppoſed diſcoveries, but with a deſign to collect the general drift and tendency of his reaſoning, to the end I might lay it before thoſe who are infinitely better able to judge than my ſelf; and who, from ſeeing ſcattered hints brought together, might be invited to conſider the matter more ſeriouſly; to condemn and refute any thing that is falſe, and to approve, ſupport, and propagate every thing that is true. For I cannot help thinking it ſome reproach to the curioſity, as well as religious zeal of the Clergy of this nation, that ſentiments ſo new and ſurpriſing, in matters of religion, ſhould have been

ſtalking

ſtalking about for ſo many years, without meeting with any examination, approbation, or confutation.

To give your Lordſhip, then, (from whoſe great proficiency in the Eaſtern learning, the only foundation of Scripture-knowledge; and your thorough knowledge of natural things, from whence all ideas of beings and things inviſible are conveyed: your known readineſs to forward any work in favour of religion; eſpecially a work of this kind to eſtabliſh the true meaning of the Scriptures, much wanted, I expect a ſolution of my doubts;) an account of theſe things that have made the greateſt impreſſion on me, in the order in which I have been able to comprehend them.

The author affirms (what I think moſt of the learned world, at preſent, agree in) that pointing in the *Hebrew* writings is a modern invention, ſome centuries later than the days of our Saviour, contrived, after the language ceaſed to be commonly ſpoken, by the Jews, to favour their own conſtructions, and therefore of no authority to determine the ſenſe of any word, but for that reaſon to be avoided.

That, as the underſtanding, ſo the proper and original ſenſe of many of the *Hebrew* words uſed to expreſs matters of importance in philoſophy and theology, was, in ſome degree, altered or loſt, when the children of *Iſrael* made defections from the true religion, before the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, ſo, in the diſperſion that attended that Captivity, the pure *Hebrew* was altogether beat out of common uſage, and the knowledge of it remained only amongſt the few that were learned, and attentive to the true religion and philoſophy that was delivered by *Moſes*, and the other inſpired writers.

THAT the *Greek* tranſlation, commonly called the *Septuagint*, being made long after the return from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, when the genuine ſenſe of the *Hebrew* words was, in a great meaſure, loſt, is extremely imperfect; partly, as the *Greek* language is deſtitute of words to convey the full and proper meaning of the *Hebrew* expreſſions; partly, as the tranſlators might have been ignorant, and might have accommodated their interpretation to their own views, in philoſophy and theology, which were corrupted; and partly, as they durſt not (had their underſtanding been better) tranſlate, in ſome points, truly, for fear of provoking the *Egyptians*, in whoſe country they compoſed their tranſlation; and whoſe Gods, had they given a faithful tranſlation, they muſt to the laſt degree vilify and affront.

THAT, nevertheleſs, this and other tranſlations ſo fully diſcover the genius of the *Hebrew* language, and ſo certainly tranſlate words, when employed about matters that the interpreters were under no byaſs to render falſly, that a key from thence may be made for conſtruing, with certainty, the whole *Hebrew* ſcriptures.

THE Author avers that the *Hebrew* language (from which, it ſeems pretty certain, the *Phœnician*, the *Chaldee*, the *Syriack*, the *Arabick*, the *Greek*, the *Latin*, and divers other branches were derived) was the original one; framed in Paradiſe, and with this particularity, that each root is taken from ſome particular beaſt, bird, plant, flower, or ſome other ſenſible object, and employed to repreſent ſome very obvious idea of action or condition raiſed by ſuch ſenſible object, from whence it is further carried to ſignify ſpiritual or mental things, of which we can frame ideas only by the help of material or bodily things.

He denies that any one root in the whole language conveys ideas of a different meaning; and affirms that one, and but one, leading ſenſe runs through all the formation of the ſame root; contrary to the eſtabliſhed doctrine of the *Jews*, who, by variety of arbitrary pointings, aſcribe different and contradictory ſenſes very often to a word compoſed of the very ſame letters; with deſign, as our Author ſuggeſts, to darken the ſenſe of the Scriptures, chiefly, if not altogether, in thoſe points, which contain the knowledge of the Chriſtian ſyſtem, and the religion of the Heathens.

After obſerving that there is not one line of authentick *Hebrew* left in the whole world, but what is compriſed in the books of the Old Teſtament, our Author inſiſts that there is one, and but one, certain way of decyphering it, that is, by comparing every word in all the various combinations and ſentences in which it appears, and gathering from thence the leading or original idea it was intended to raiſe; which is ever, from ſuch compariſon, with certainty to be collected.

He ſays, that, though all the modern *Hebreians* had the uſe of very accurate concordances, that might have helped them forward in this inveſtigation, yet their progreſs was marr'd by the blind reſpect they paid to the falſe or fraudulent pointings of their adverſaries the *Jews*; and that he, ſhaking himſelf looſe from thoſe fetters, has been able to ſettle the genuine meaning of every important word in the whole Old Teſtament.

And, from the fix'd and perpetual meaning of the words ſo explained, he ſays he is able to ſhew that the Scriptures, however diſguiſed and disfigured by the tranſlation, are written with the utmoſt accuracy, propriety, and truth; that they contain a perfect ſyſtem of Natural Philoſophy, and,

and, upon that grafted, a complete ſyſtem of Theology, ſo far as mankind is capable of receiving that ſublime knowledge, and unerring rules for all religious ſervice and belief.

THROUGH the whole of his works, he attempts to define, and determine the true ſenſe of a great many words uſed by *Moſes* and the Prophets, in the deſcription of the formation of the world, and the preſervation and ſupport of all the operations that are carried on in it; he avers that the deſcriptions, by them given in theſe words, contain a mechanical account of all the powers, and of the operations carried on in, and by this material ſyſtem; and he inſiſts that all the phænomena in Nature can be accounted for by the principles laid down by them.

BUT, to give you as clear a view, as I am able, of the further deſign of our Author; He ſuppoſes it will not be denied to him, that Man, a compound of ſoul and body, cannot frame to himſelf, or compare ideas, but ſuch as are taken from ſenſible objects: what powers or faculties the ſoul might have, if detached from the body, we cannot know; but, as we are now made, we upon moderate reflection diſcover, that the ſoul of man, in this ſtate, has not power to frame to itſelf, or to receive any idea that does not come from the ſenſes, at leaſt from ſome feeling or ſenſation communicated to it by, or through the body.

THE ſun, the light, the air, the earth, the body of man, we can frame ideas of, as we can of the manner of their acting, and being acted upon; but the ſoul, which perceives and compares thoſe ideas, we can frame no manner of idea of, nor of it's manner of acting, or being acted upon.

AND we, who know that we have no capacity to conceive any idea of any thing that does not affect

affect our ſenſes, muſt conclude that our not perceiving is no proof that there may not be millions of different beings and ſubſtances round us, beſides thoſe that affect our ſenſes, of which, and of their powers or actions, we can know nothing.

As man has not the leaſt idea of the matter or ſubſtance of his own ſoul, or of its manner of acting, or being acted upon; ſo he has no capacity of reaſoning about it, by comparing it with things perceived: he cannot for example, compare it with ſpace or figure; he cannot ſay it is, or is not, comprehended within limits of any kind; he cannot ſay it moves, or does not move, or at all imagine how it is ſupported, or acts.

We perceive how a ſolid body is moved by the impulſe of another ſolid body, or of a fluid, and is continued in motion ſo long as the impulſe laſts; and we can conceive how a plant, or animal, may be ſupported, may grow, or decay, mechanically, by the operation of different material agents: but we can have no conception how the ſoul acts on itſelf, or on matter, how it is acted upon, or how it is ſupported.

And, being ſo much in the dark concerning the principal part of ~~our~~ ourſelves, the only knowing thing in us, it is no wonder we ſhould be incapable of framing any juſt idea of that inviſible ſpiritual Being, by which we, and every other created thing, were made.

Our Author thinks that, by the light of nature only, men could not poſſibly have diſcovered whether this material ſyſtem, which, he ſays, is ſo framed, as to be a ſelf-moving machine, exiſted from eternity, and was the cauſe and ſupport of itſelf, and of every thing in it; or whether it was contrived, and the parts of it put together, by an higher hand. But be that as it will, and were it even

even to be ſuppoſed that man, by thorough obſervation, and by a juſt induction, could diſcover *à poſteriori* the exiſtence of ſome eternal ſelf-exiſtent cauſe, whoſe work this creation is; our Author ſeems to be well warranted, when he affirms that it is preſumptuous in man, becauſe it is impoſſible, to frame ſuch an idea of this inviſible agent, from his own ſcanty notions and apprehenſions, as ſhall be the ſtandard and teſt, by which to try every thing that is, or may be, in queſtion concerning the Firſt Cauſe.

MAN may, for example, be in the right to attribute all poſſible perfections to this Being; but, 'till he can determine what is abſolute perfection (taking in the circle of all poſſible beings, their actions and attributes) it is impoſſible for him with juſtice to conclude, that, becauſe this or that ſeems to him to be perfection, it therefore, according to the meaſure which he conceives of it, belongs to the Author of Nature.

AND though it ſhould be admitted that man, by the light of nature, could diſcover the dependence of this created ſyſtem on a ſelf-exiſtent Creator, yet it is certain he cannot frame to himſelf any idea of that Being, his nature, ſubſtance, powers, or manner of exiſting or acting; and that, if there is any knowledge of ſuch things amongſt men, it muſt come from ſome other ſource than that of nature and obſervation.

FROM this ſtate of man's nature the Author infers one indiſpenſible neceſſity for Revelation; if God intended that man ſhould know him, his goodneſs, power, wiſdom, and mercy; ſhould make returns of gratitude, love, adoration, and obedience; and ſhould conform himſelf to that order, which by the divine will was eſtabliſhed: and that the knowledge of every thing that was to be known, and believed, was revealed, our Author

thor inſiſts, will demonſtrably be proved, when what is revealed, is underſtood and conſidered.

A REVELATION therefore, our Author inſiſts, was made by God to man, at two different periods; the firſt after the Creation, and upon the Fall; the ſecond in the wilderneſs to the *Iſraelites*, and on various occaſions afterwards, by different methods of communication, not to mention the appearances to the Patriarchs to reſtore the knowledge of the firſt revelation, which had been pretty much loſt, or miſunderſtood, and to fix and aſcertain it by writing (a method, as the Author will have it, then firſt revealed) ſo as it ſhould never after be obliterated or left dubious.

To begin with the laſt. The firſt thing that is met with in the books of *Moſes* is an aſſertion that God created the heavens and the earth, which is followed by a particular account of the order and manner of the formation of all that was created, 'till the work was perfected. After which, God is ſaid to have reſted; and our Author aſſerts, that it is alſo ſaid, the perfect machine, then left to itſelf, carried on all the operations in this ſyſtem, by certain known laws of mechaniſm, explained by *Moſes*, and throughout the Scriptures by the other inſpired penmen.

THE ſum of what our Author avers to be the doctrine of the Scriptures, on this head, is, that, beſides the differently formed particles, of which this earth, and the ſeveral metals, minerals, and other ſolid ſubſtances in it, and in the other ſolid orbs, are compoſed, God at firſt created all that ſubtle fluid which now is, and from the Creation has been, in the condition of fire, light, or air, and goes under the name of the Heavens.

THE particles of this fluid, (which our Author calls atoms) when they are ſingle and uncompounded, are inconceivably minute, and ſo ſubtle

as to pervade the pores of all ſubſtances whatever, whether ſolid, or fluid, without any great difficulty or reſiſtance: when they are puſhed forward in ſtraight lines, by the action of fire, or are reflected or refracted in ſtraight lines, they produce light, and are ſo called; but when the interpoſition of any opaque body hinders their progreſs in ſtraight Lines, they paſs, but ceaſe to produce light.

THESE particles or atoms, which, when moving in ſtraight lines, produce light, and, if collected and put into another ſort of motion, would produce heat and fire, are, as our Author inſiſts, when the force impelling them ceaſes to act with vigour, and when their motion is retarded, ſo made, that they are apt to adhere in ſmall maſſes or grains, which the Author calls ſpirit or air; and is of the ſame kind and texture with that air, which we daily breathe, and which we feel in wind when it blows.

THE ſun, which our Author places at the centre of this ſyſtem, is an orb included in a vaſt collection of this ſubtile matter in the action of fire, which continually melts down all the air that is brought into it by the powerful action of the firmament or expanſion, hereafter to be explained, into the ſubtile matter juſt mentioned; and with an immenſe force ſends forth, in perpetual ſtreams of light, this ſame ſubtile matter, ſo melted down to the circumference of this ſyſtem, which the Author ſays is bounded, as he avers the ſpace comprehended within it is abſolutely full.

THE matter thus melted down at the orb of the ſun into light muſt, as every thing is full, either ſtand ſtill, or make its way outwards to the circumference, being forced by the particles, which are concreted into air at the utmoſt extremities; and

and return towards the ſun, where the fluid being moſt ſubtile gives leaſt reſiſtance, and take up the place that the light left.

And therefore this endleſs uninterrupted flux of matter from the ſun in light, in place of being an expence that ſhould deſtroy that orb (which our Author takes to be an inſupportable objection to Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s ſcheme) is the very means of preſerving it, and every thing elſe in this ſyſtem, in its action and vigour, by preſſing back perpetual ſupplies of air to be melted down into light, and thereby produces a continual circulation. Theſe perpetual fluxes or tides of matter outwards and inwards, in every point, from the centre to the circumference, mechanically, and neceſſarily, as our Author inſiſts, produce that conſtant gyration in the earth and the planets round their own centres, and round the ſun; and he avers, though he has not yet thought fit to explain it, that the ſame principle, with ſome circumſtances, ariſing from the ſituation and fluxes of light coming from the other orbs, will account alſo for the motions of the moon.

Besides the rotation of the orbs, the Author affirms that the adverſe motions of the light puſhing towards the circumference, and the air puſhing towards the centre with immenſe force, form a general expanſion (as he tranſlates the word rendered firmament) which brings that ſtreſs or compreſſure on all bodies it meets with, that binds together ſolids, keeps fluids as they were, cauſes the variation of times and ſeaſons, the raiſing of water, the production of vegetables and animals, and in ſhort produces all the effects falſly aſcribed to gravity or attraction; continues motion without the aſſiſtance of the unmechanical principle of projection; produces, ſupplies, and ſupports vegetables, fruits, and animals; in ſhort,

produces

produces almoſt all the effects and phænomena in nature.

THESE are ſome of the out-lines of our Author's philoſophy, very repugnant, indeed to the notions commonly received; but the authorities, by which he avers he can ſupport them, are two, and they are pretty conſiderable.

FIRST, He ſays that *Moſes* and the Prophets, who, by divine authority, were to reveal and explain to mankind how the operations in this ſyſtem were carried on, have in plain terms ſaid ſo. And,

SECONDLY, He affirms that he can, by comparing every true obſervation and experiment that have at any time been made by the Royal Society, or its members, or by any foreign ſocieties of learned men, and by a great many obſervations and experiments made by himſelf, to which the curious have hitherto very little attended, with the ſyſtem of philoſophy revealed in the Scriptures, ſhew that all the various phænomena of nature are to be accounted for mechanically thereby; and that the modern ſyſtems, as well as all others not taken from the Scriptures, are falſe, abſurd, and unmechanical.

IT is becauſe this looks highly improbable, if not impoſſible, to moſt men, that an examination of our Author's notions is neglected; but, as, in proportion as it is improbable, it would confirm the Scriptures, ſhould it be found true: I confeſs my deſire is the greater that the men qualified to judge would examine it.

As it is extremely new, ſo, at firſt ſight, it ſeems odd that our Author ſhould ſuppoſe it neceſſary for the Creator to give to mankind a courſe of philoſophy, ſo to ſpeak; but, to remove this difficulty, he reaſons to this effect.

THE

THE end to which a rational diſcerning ſoul was given to man, was, that by the organs of the body he might perceive the beauty, the order, the harmony of nature; and thence receive ideas of the infinite wiſdom, power, and goodneſs of its Author, which ſhould lead to admiration, love, duty, dependence, adoration, acknowledgment, and a deſire of further knowledge, and viſion of what in this world man can take in by borrowed ideas only.

IF the mechaniſm of nature had not been revealed to man, he poſſibly never would have diſcovered it to any certainty; at leaſt, would not have diſcovered it, for ages: and ſo long theſe incentives to admiration, love, ſervice, and adoration, would have been wanting.

IF the mechaniſm could have been underſtood, without the further diſcovery that this ſelf-moving machine is no more than an inanimate piece of clock-work, created, as well as put together, by the ſupreme, intelligent, beneficent Being, it might have led man to place his admiration and worſhip on the machine, in place of him that made it, as the miſtaken part of mankind always did.

AND therefore, if, before man could know the obligations he had to the ſupreme intelligent Being as his Redeemer, that is, before the Fall, the ſole light he could view him in, to produce admiration, love, duty, ſervice, and deſire of further union, was that of the infinitely wiſe, powerful, and beneficent Creator, and Supporter; it ſeems neceſſary to conclude that thoſe diſcoveries, which he could not make of himſelf, certainly were made to him.

AND this the rather, that, as man was the laſt piece formed of the creation, and as even his body was framed, before the ſoul, without which it could

could not perceive, was breathed into it, he could not have any mean to know how, where, or by whom or what, this world and all its tenants were produced; and by the nature of the thing, could not in many ages, if at all, arrive at any knowledge of what was certainly intended to be the object of his meditation, and the cauſe of his love, duty, and ſervice.

WHEREFORE, as it was neceſſary he ſhould ſpeedily be inſtructed, our Author thinks, *Moſes* has intimated to us that he was, in telling us that God was pleaſed to plant a garden for him, which he was to cultivate and keep. Our Author obſerving that gardens, amongſt the antient nations, and planted groves were ſacred, and places of worſhip; reflecting that it was but a poor employment for the chief of the creation to cultivate a garden, whilſt the earth, not being yet curſed, nor man doom'd to hard labour, might produce ſpontaneouſly fruits fit for him, eſpecially the trees, being of God's own planting; and obſerving that the words tranſlated *to till* and *to keep*, alſo properly ſignify *to worſhip* and *obſerve*; and taking in a great many other circumſtances, too numerous to be here recited, concludes that this garden was planted and dreſſed in the form of a plan or ſcheme, to ſhew the ſituations, motions, and actions of the heavenly bodies, and the powers in this ſyſtem, picture-ways or hieroglyphically, for man's comprehending and remembering more certainly the poſitions, motions, and influences of the heavenly bodies, and the actions of fire, light, and air, or, as our Author calls it, ſpirit, in circulation; ſeveral of thoſe bodies, or of the effects flowing from their motions or ſituations, and from the circulation of light and air, might be repreſented by trees of different forms, or growths; and the

the circulation might itſelf be repreſented by ſome of thoſe trees, or perhaps by the waters in *Eden*, which, by the four rivers, were plentifully furniſhed.

And as the Author underſtands this garden to have been for inſtruction, and the intent of *Moſes*'s recording that circumſtance to be, to let us know that man was ſo inſtructed; ſo he lays a pretty deal of weight upon another matter, related in the ſame hiſtory, of God's bringing the ſeveral animals before *Adam*, to the end he might give them proper names.

As the names *Adam* gave to animals were expreſſive of the chief talents or inſtincts of thoſe animals, and afterwards in the *Hebrew* language came generally to be roots for words to ſignify the paſſions, actions, or inclinations, which thoſe inſtincts or talents raiſed the ideas of; our Author concludes that God cauſed theſe animals to exhibit to *Adam*, for his information and inſtruction, their ſeveral qualities, particularities, and inſtincts, to help him forward in the knowledge that was to be communicated to him.

Our Author then perceiving clearly, that a ſyſtem of Natural Philoſophy, or a deſcription of this machine, was publiſhed by *Moſes*, when Revelation was, as he terms it, republiſhed in writing; obſerving that there was full as much occaſion, or rather more, for a diſcovery of this ſyſtem to *Adam*, before he had opportunities to make obſervations, than afterwards; and diſcovering the true ſenſe and meaning of thoſe intimations, that *Moſes* gives, concerning the tranſactions in the garden of *Eden*; concludes that *Adam* was by God inſtructed in the knowledge of the powers and operations of this ſyſtem, and of the duty and regard owing to the Author of it, as well as of ſo much of the nature, powers, and

and attributes of the Author and Creator of it, as the children of *Iſrael* were acquainted with, by the republication of Revelation by *Moſes*, in writing.

As to the manner of this firſt Revelation, our Author, proceeding upon the principles already mentioned, that man is incapable of any ideas but what are taken in by the ſenſes, concludes that God could not give to man, whilſt clogged with a body, the true idea of himſelf, or any otherwiſe repreſent himſelf than by referring for a ſimilitude to that thing in this material ſyſtem, that bore the neareſt reſemblance in perfection, power, nature, and operation; and therefore he ſuppoſes (what he afterwards affirms he has proved) that, to give a man ſome image or likeneſs of himſelf, he pointed to the machine by which this ſyſtem is ſupported; the heavens conſiſting of matter in three different conditions, fire, light, and air, or ſpirit, as the Author calls it, which mutually ſupport each other, and neceſſarily concur in the joint action of that powerful machine, by which every material thing is moved, ſupported, and preſerved; exhibiting thereby ſome ſimilitude, from whence an idea might be taken of his eſſence, perſonality, power, and manner of action.

As *Adam* gave names to all living creatures, and the uſe and intent of a name is to raiſe, in the hearer, an idea of the thing named; our Author ſuppoſes that every other creature that came within the cognizance of the firſt man had alſo a name given to it; and inſiſts that the heavens, or the machine, deſcribed as above, was by *Adam* called *The Names*, by way of eminence, to ſignify that they were the repreſentatives of the Deity, that from which the idea of him was to be taken: שם *Shem* in the *Hebrew* language ſignifies

ſignifies Name; and he avers that שמים *Shemim* is the maſculine plural of that noun, and ſignifies properly Names; and by this he underſtands that the heavens, or *Shemim*, were always thought of, and ſpoken of, by thoſe who were rightly informed by Revelation, as the repreſentation, or material object expreſſive of the Deity.

If mankind was thus inſtructed in the powers and operations of Nature, the leſſon would not ſoon, or eaſily, wear out; becauſe every obſervation, every ſymptom in nature would, day after day, juſtify it; but the fact, that this knowledge was revealed, might ſoon be forgotten by the ſucceeding generations of men, or be diſbelieved, and with it the knowledge of the inviſible Author of all. Men who ſaw this machine perfect and ſelf-moving might doubt whether it had not ſelf-exiſtence in it; and whether, as it was the immediate cauſe and producer of all their comforts, it was not the only powerful Being to which they had any obligations, and owed duty and ſervice; whence, by degrees, worſhip might be miſplaced, being transferred from the true inviſible God to the viſible repreſentation of him, in which all power and perfection might be lodged, by the opinions of vain imaginary men, who forgot or diſregarded Revelation.

That this in fact was the caſe, that the early deſerters of the true God placed their worſhip and ſervice on the heavens, the Author proves at great length, and with great ſtrength of evidence, as a good deal of his reaſoning depends on it.

If the Scriptures are to be deciſive in this point, it is put beyond doubt, by the many formal declarations that the crime of the nations, and of the apoſtate *Iſraelites*, was their ſerving the heavens, the Hoſt of heavens, the Queen of Heaven, as it is tranſlated; the Sun, Moon, and

and Stars; and falſe Gods, *Baal*, *Moloch*, *&c.* which our Author ſhews were repreſentations of ſome of the powers or attributes of the heavens; and the many miracles wrought to convince mankind, that they miſplaced their worſhip, and that the inviſible God had thoſe powers under his command.

And, were their credit in any degree queſtionable, ſuch remains as we have of the antient heathen worſhip would ſhew with abundant evidence, that, till they loſt the knowledge of their philoſophy, (which happened by accidents largely deſcribed by our author) they continually retained the powers or attributes of the heavens for the objects of their religious ſervice.

Our Author admits that the more modern Heathens (by theſe he means the *Greeks* and *Romans*, and their ſucceſſors in point of time) who had loſt the knowledge of nature, loſt alſo the knowledge of the object of their worſhip, and the ſenſe of the very names, by which their gods were called or diſtinguiſhed; ſo that, though they adored the air, they knew not for what: but then he avers, that the antients (that is, all the nations that preceded the change of language, by which knowledge was retained) adored the heavens, or ſome powers in them, or attributes of them.

To this end he has collected the names of all the gods of the nations mentioned in Scripture, together with the names or titles of their temples, in his treatiſe of *the names and attributes of the Trinity of the Gentiles*, and has offered an examination and analyſis of thoſe names, together with ſome account of the ſervices paid to thoſe ſuppoſed deities, and the many reproaches made by the Prophets to their votaries and worſhippers; which, with great evidence, ſeems to ſhew that

theſe

theſe gods were indeed none other than the heavens, or ſome ſuppoſed powers in them.

THE very general adoration paid by the antients to the heavenly bodies, the worſhip of the ſun, of fire, of light, *&c.* that prevailed in the earlieſt times; the conjectural philoſophy of the late Heathens, the *Greeks*, and *Romans*, which centred in opinions, that by their *Jupiter*, *Apollo*, &c. was meant either the *æther*, or the ſun, or the active force of nature in general, juſtifies, to thoſe who value ſuch authorities, our Author's ſentiments.

OUR Author is out of humour with thoſe who fancy the antients ſuch idiots as to have worſhipped brutes, reptiles, inſects, or any inanimate things.

LET the worſhip in *Egypt* be an inſtance; the reſpect they had to *Apis*, to a bull or cow, was not at all paid to that animal. All mankind knows in relation to *Egypt*, becauſe their monuments were better preſerved than thoſe of other nations, that they wrote by hieroglyphicks; that is, that they expreſſed their ideas by repreſenting the figures of animals, or of inanimate things, of circles, triangles, *&c.* in ſuch ſeries and order, as to convey their meaning; in ſo doing, they muſt fix upon ſome things eaſily diſtinguiſhed, to repreſent what could not ſo eaſily be painted, or by figure expreſſed. And, if their fancy led them to expreſs the fire at the ſun by the front or head of a bull or heifer, the reſpect ſhewed to that animal was evidently meant to the fire at the ſun, and the *Egyptians* did not worſhip the bull or heifer, but the ſun; no more than in their hieroglyphical writing a bull or ſerpent was meant, when the figures of thoſe animals were repreſented.

Our Author goes through a great many miſtakes of the moderns in this particular, which are diſhonourable to the underſtandings of the antients, and amongſt theſe takes notice particularly of one, *viz.* the reproach to the *Egyptians*, that they worſhipped an onion; and indeed the Scripture upbraids the *Iſraelites* with their ſtrong luſting after the onions of *Egypt*.

But our Author ſays the moderns will ceaſe to abuſe the antients on this ſcore, when they take the trouble to cut up the common onion, and to ſatisfy their own eyes that it conſiſts of ſeven different ſpheres, or *involucra*, one within another, in the way that the antients underſtood the ſeven ſpheres in this ſyſtem; and was therefore more proper than any other thing, that can be thought of, to repreſent the ſolar ſyſtem in their hieroglyphical writings, and religious repreſentation.

He takes notice, that from the hieroglyphical repreſentation of the heavens, or, perhaps, of fire, amongſt the *Egyptians*, by *Apis*, the *Iſraelites* calf of gold in the wilderneſs, and the brace of calves of *Jeroboam*, who had his education in *Egypt*, ſprang: not that the *Iſraelites* at firſt, or *Jeroboam* afterwards, dreamed of any powers or vertues in thoſe calves; but that they imagined, they put themſelves thereby under the protection of the heavens, of which they took that idol to be the approved emblem.

To all their hieroglyphical repreſentations of their Deity, he obſerves, they added a crown, by way of ornament or diſtinction, (as for much the ſame reaſon, though in another reſpect, which he elſewhere explains, they did to their prieſts;) this crown was a circle of gold, the moſt precious metal; from which aroſe, quite round the circumference, plates of gold, formed like pyramids, imitating rays of light; and in the intervals

intervals, between thoſe ſhining rays, ſpaces of the ſame pyramidal form, but pointed inwards, to repreſent, as our Author ſays, the irradiation or flux of the light outwards from the ſun, and the preſſure or return of the air or ſpirit inwards, by which he inſiſts this machine is ſupported.

And in a great many more of their ornaments and emblems he finds evident traces of what their ſervice and religion pointed at, to wit, a recognition of the powers in the heavens, as that from whence all their bleſſings flowed, and on which all their dependence was ſettled.

As this miſtaking, which, in effect, is denying the true God, was evidently the crime of thoſe heathens, who were contemporary with the *Iſraelitiſh* ſtate; ſo, our Author thinks, it was the offence of the antediluvian world, for which men merited to be cut off, all but one family. His reaſons for ſo thinking are numerous, but what to me appears the ſtrongeſt, is drawn from the puniſhment, which was, as our Author inſiſts, the controuling the ſettled operations of the powers that were ſuppoſed to be independent and omnipotent; the deſtroying the earth, and with it rebellious man, the reforming the earth after that diſſolution, and preſerving thoſe perſons, by whom it was to be repeopled, from the general ruin, to be witneſſes for God of the power by him exerted, and to inſtruct their poſterity in the ſervice of that Being, by whom they were preſerved.

Our Author talks of deſtroying the earth, which, he ſays, is in formal words affirmed by *Moſes*; he ſpeaks of forcing up the waters of the abyſs through apertures, which, he ſays, were left for a communication with the waters above; diſſolving the ſhell, reforming it with new apertures and fiſſures, and ſending back thoſe waters

again through cracks and fiſſures in the ſhell of ſtone, that environed the abyſs, to their former reſidence; he ſpeaks alſo of great quantities of terreſtrial matter carried down through thoſe fiſſures and openings along with the waters into the abyſs; that matter formed at the centre of the hollow ſphere into a ſolid orb, like to a kernel floating in the waters, and very many effects in the motion of the waters, and of this earth, to be accounted for by that collection of waters, and this floating orb; all which, he aſſerts, are to be gathered from what the Scripture reveals, and will account mechanically for the many various appearances, which hitherto have been only gueſſed at, from ſchemes founded on falſe and impoſſible principles.

As an inſtance of the perfection of the natural knowledge that is to be met with in the Scriptures, and of the abſurdity of thoſe who charge the writers of them with ignorance; he avers, that the loadſtone and its effects are frequently, at leaſt ſix times, directly ſpoken of; that the reaſon and cauſe of the myſterious phænomena of magnetiſm are clearly to be gathered from the revealed philoſophy.

And, however Freethinkers may make the ſtory of the flood an objection to the veracity of the Scriptures, and may laugh at the account, which our Author gives of it from the ſacred writers; he affirms, that, as he has had the curioſity to make collections of moſt of the different ſorts of things, and each of the ſame ſort differently formed, under ground, and numerous obſervations on the ſituation of things in the bowels of the earth; he can, by evidence to the eye, convince any rational man, that the account he gives of the deſtruction at the flood, and reformation

of the earth, from the Scriptures, is graphically true.

NOAH and his family, who had remained in dutiful allegiance to the inviſible God, were, doubtleſs, by this powerful piece of vengeance over the rebellious world, convinced of the ſupremacy of the Deity over his rival the heavens, whoſe power they had ſeen ſuſpended and baffled; and their poſterity continued dutiful 'till the time of building the tower of *Babel*, when nature and imagination began to work again.

ALL tranſlations have made a very odd ſpot of work of this piece of hiſtory. They have ſuppoſed it ſays that, before this accident, all men ſpoke the ſame language; that, afraid of another deluge, they ſet about building a tower, whoſe top ſhould reach to the heavens; that they did this to get them a name; and that God became ſo jealous of this attempt, that it was worth his while to work a very extraordinary miracle, to confound their language, ſo as one could not underſtand what the other ſaid; and to diſperſe them over the face of the earth; and from this notable event the birth of many languages, and the firſt peopling of many nations, is ſought.

OUR Author, who inſiſts that a perfect knowledge of the *Hebrew* language will deliver the Scripture from many abſurdities, with which it is by the tranſlations ſaddled, ſays;

IN the *firſt* place, the text does not bear that all the earth was of one language, or that their language was confounded. It ſays indeed, that all the earth was of one [שפה *Shaphah*] lip; and afterwards that God ſaid he would confound their lip.

Now our Author obſerves, what, upon comparing all the texts, holds very truly, that the

Hebrews had two words of nearly the ſame ſignification, to thoſe that did not advert to the diſtinction; שפה *Leſhun*, which ſignifies tongue, and *Shaphah*, which ſignifies lip; but which, in the propriety of their expreſſion, they never confounded; uſing *Leſhun*, perpetually, to ſignify language, and *Shaphah* to ſignify religious ſervice, or confeſſion, and never to ſignify language. All therefore the text ſays is; that, before the building of *Babel*, the whole earth had one and the ſame religious ſervice or confeſſion; and that, upon that attempt, the new confeſſion, which the projectors of this building intended to ſet up, was to be confounded, which begun in the diſperſion of the undertakers.

In the *next* place, the tranſlators render the text, as if it ſaid, *Let us build us a tower, whoſe top ſhall reach to the Heavens, that we may make us a name, leſt we be diſperſed, &c.* And ſurely, beſides other improprieties in this ſuppoſed deſign, it muſt appear a very ridiculous project to build a tower, that ſhould defend againſt deſtruction by a flood, in ſo very low a ground as the valley of *Shinar*; or from diſperſion, which want of proviſion would force them to. But our Author obſerves, that the *Hebrew* text ſays nothing of reaching to the Heavens: that word is a meer ſupplement from the tranſlators fancy, who were ignorant that the word render'd *Tower* ſignifies *Temple*, and therefore did not perceive the obvious meaning of the whole, which is, that theſe wicked men, who lived in a country where, 'till then, there was no difference of religion, the whole earth being of one confeſſion, apoſtatiſed to the ſervice and worſhip of the Heavens; and encouraged one another to build a city and temple, the top whereof ſhould be

be ſacred to the Heavens; and that God, to check this early relapſe into the religion of their antediluvian forefathers, thought fit to confound, not their language, but their confeſſion, or liturgy, that is, to make them differ about the manner and form of the intended ſervice and worſhip, which had the effect, at that time, of marring their irreligious project; and of making them fall out amongſt themſelves, and of making them deſiſt from their enterpriſe.

TAKING the thing thus, and ſuppoſing theſe men took the Heavens for a deity, there was ſenſe in their building a temple, and on it an altar to that being that could, according to their ſuppoſition, prevent their deſtruction and diſperſion; and it was well and mercifully done, on the part of God, to make them differ about their intended ſervice, and thereby to fall out amongſt themſelves, and relinquiſh the undertaking. But, tranſlating the text as our expoſitors have done, a moſt abſurd and impracticable attempt is ſuppoſed to call upon the interpoſition of the Deity, in a very unneceſſary miracle, which, at the ſame time, our Author avers, appears not to have been wrought; becauſe the ſame Scriptures ſhew the whole earth was of one language, though not of one lip, or religious confeſſion, for ſeveral ages after.

As our Author has delivered the Scriptures, by his acquaintance with *Hebrew*, from this notorious abſurdity, with which the ignorance of the tranſlators had ſtained it; he, on an infinity, almoſt, of other occaſions, interpoſes to ſet their falſe interpretations to rights. According to his conſtruction of the language, it is no where in the text ſaid, that the earth ſtands ſtill, and that the ſun goes round it; but on the contrary it

is, on every proper occaſion, inculcated that the ſun ſtands ſtill, fixed, and that the earth runs round.

After the flood God did not put the rainbow firſt in the cloud, as a ſign to man; but he conſtituted or gave (which is the *Hebrew* word) that bow, which naturally was in the cloud, as a memorial of his promiſe not to deſtroy the earth again by water.

And in multitudes of other caſes our Author brings, as he ſays, from the genuine conſtruction of the text, a very commodious ſenſe, where the tranſlation is, not to ſay worſe, hardly intelligible.

As our Author's general propoſition, that the mechanical powers in the Heavens was the deity ſet up by the Heathen, againſt the God of Nature and of *Iſrael*, is a key to the underſtanding a vaſt number of expreſſions, expoſtulations, and claims, uſed throughout by the writers of the Scriptures, which paſſed unheeded, or were thought trivial, and accommodated to miſtaken notions of ignorant men heretofore; ſo the ſame poſition, as he manages it, is of very great ſervice in ſhewing the propriety and perfect intention and uſe of very many miracles, miraculous appearances, and religious inſtitutions, which no man hitherto has pretended to ſhew the adequate reaſon, uſe, or occaſion for.

If the religion of the rebellious Heathen was to aſcribe all power to the machine of the Heavens, in the conditions of fire, light, and air, or ſpirit, but principally in that of fire, on the acting whereof all the reſt ſeemed to depend; then it was proper for the Deity, when a new revelation and religious œconomy was to be eſtabliſhed in the family of *Abraham*, to paſs between the parts

parts of the creatures, appointed to be divided, in the appearance of fire, light, and ſmoke.

It was proper to ſhew his ſuperiority over the gods of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, by puniſhing them, who worſhipped fire, by fire ſent from Heaven: It was proper, when *Moſes* was to be ſent upon his miſſion, to appear to him in the buſh in the form of fire.

It was proper, when the conteſt was between the prieſts of *Baal* and the prophet *Eliſha*, and when the formal trial was to be, whether *Baal* or *Jehovah* was the true God, by this teſt, whether the offering of the one or of the other ſhould be firſt conſumed by fire ſent from Heaven; it was proper, I ſay, on that caſe, for *Jehovah* to give proof of his power, by ſending down fire, and conſuming the ſacrifice, water, *&c.* And,

Not to mention a great many other inſtances, when the captains of fifty were ſucceſſively ſent out by the King of *Iſrael*, who then fell in with the worſhip of the Heavens, in defiance of the true God, to bring *Elijah* to him a priſoner; it was proper, to puniſh their preſumption, and to manifeſt the power of *Jehovah* over the Heavens, to conſume thoſe captains by fire ſent from Heaven.

And, though the many miracles wrought in *Egypt*, and in the wilderneſs, to which, for evidence of the power and ſupremacy of *Jehovah*, there are many references and appeals made by the later writers of the Scriptures, ſeem to our modern wiſemen, who think that God might have done the buſineſs a much ſhorter way, very unneceſſary and ſuperfluous, and as ſuch are diſbelieved; yet our Author apprehends they were abſolutely neceſſary to the deſign of *Jehovah*, and of the utmoſt importance to mankind, for ſettle-

ing the point in diſpute between the followers of the true and thoſe of the falſe God.

THE intent of theſe various miracles, our Author ſays, was, in the face and ſeeing of the moſt powerful and populous, the moſt learned, the moſt ſuperſtitiouſly addicted nation then in the world to the ſervice of the Heavens, to ſhew the power of *Jehovah* over their pretended gods in all their attributes and powers, and over their prieſts; and, in ſo doing, to convict that people, and all that ſhould hear of thoſe tranſactions, and ſtill remain in the ſame error; and to convince the people, that he was about to ſeparate to himſelf, ſo fully of his authority, that they ſhould never (bearing theſe things in mind) apoſtatiſe.

FOR theſe ends, after the magicians or prieſts of the fictitious gods were foiled, *Jehovah* permitted *Pharaoh* to harden his heart, or to reſiſt; until by repeated miracles he had, to the ſight of all men, aſſerted his ſuperiority over his rivals, in controuling all the actions and powers, for which they were falſly thought gods, and making them afflict their votaries. The ſun and light were turned into a palpable darkneſs, for three days. The air was turned peſtilential; the very duſt of the earth was turned noxious; the river, which was emblematically ſacred, in whoſe waters they purified themſelves, and on whoſe banks they worſhipped, was turned into blood; the wind brought locuſts to deſtroy the votaries of the wind. All theſe plagues, and many more, which our Author explains the propriety of at length, in his *Eſſay towards a Natural Hiſtory of the Bible*, were ſo directed as to leave the *Iſraelites* unhurt, witneſſes of the ſuperiority of their God, of the obedience of the Heavens, and of the diſtraction and folly of thoſe who worſhipped them.

HITHERTO

HITHERTO miracles have been looked upon, generally, by mankind as ſo many prodigious, unnatural, and therefore wonderful events, ſurpaſſing the power of man to compaſs; brought about by divine power, to vouch the miſſion of the perſon, by whoſe hands they were wrought, and to gain credit to what he ſhould reveal, or deliver. But, if our Author is to be followed, they are to be conſidered as tending to an higher purpoſe, and are ſo many manifeſtations of the power of the true God, to gain credit to himſelf, in contradiction to the pretended powers of the heavens, that were ſet up in oppoſition: and are ſo ſorted and choſen, as beſt to prove that there is no inherent eſſential powers in the machine, the Heavens; but that all inherent and eſſential power is in *Jehovah* alone, whoſe ſervants, at his command, could alter or ſuſpend the courſe of nature.

IT was, according to our Author, to confirm the children of *Iſrael* in this faith, that the wind (in *Hebrew*, the ſpirit) ſeparated the waters of the Red Sea, and made them, contrary to the ordinary courſe of nature, ſtand on either ſide in heaps: That by *Moſes*, *Jehovah* ſhewed, in miniature, the ſame power that was exerciſed in deſtroying the earth at the flood, by cracking the *ſtrata* of ſtone, and making a ſpring of water guſh out of a rock, upon the touch of a rod: That the God of the nations, in the appearance of fire, light, and cloud, or ſpirit, which the Author ſays, (as ſhall be hereafter explained) was the emblem of the true God, was forced to attend, to lead, and to protect the camp of *Iſrael:* That the air was made to rain down food upon the armies of *Jehovah:* And that *Jehovah* was pleaſed miraculouſly, and at an appointed time, to ſhew himſelf in the appearance of fire on *Sinai*, and from thence

thence to deliver the law, and offer a covenant to the *Iſraelites*.

If all theſe things ſhall be underſtood to be done to ſettle the conteſt, and eſtabliſh the authority of *Jehovah* over the Heavens, his rivals at that time, and all other pretended deities that thereafter might, by the madneſs or ignorance of men, be ſet up:

Then the ſcope and intent of the law, given in the ten commandments, will be better underſtood; and the meaning of the religious œconomy, ceremonies, and ſervices, that thereafter were eſtabliſhed, will be more fully comprehended.

The firſt four commands, by the confeſſion of every body, are intended to aſſert and inculcate the ſovereignty of the Deity, and the excluſive title to ſervice, that is in *Jehovah*, the Creator and Preſerver of all things; in contradiction to all other pretended gods, whoſe ſervice is prohibited and guarded againſt in the moſt expreſs manner; prohibitions that do not ſeem neceſſary to be authoriſed and introduced with ſo much pomp, and by ſo many miracles, if the worſhip of a ſtock or a ſtone, a red heifer or a calf, taken in themſelves, and not conſidered as the repreſentation of that being (the Heavens) in which all material power in this ſyſtem was known to reſide, had been the only thing to be dreaded.

The other commands are generally called the moral law, and it is commonly thought that they were intended for a ſyſtem of ſocial law, as they ſeem to prohibit treſpaſſes againſt ſociety.

But in this our Author differs, and ſays, that when men are ſatisfied, as they may eaſily be from Scripture and from hiſtory, that the worſhippers of the heavens called their gods their fathers and mothers, and worſhipped them as ſuch; that they held it a religious and acceptable

ſervice

ſervice to immolate human ſacrifices, nay to offer their firſt-born to fire; that they held it lawful, nay pleaſing to ſome of their gods, to ſteal and rob for ſacrifice; that proſtitution of their wives and daughters, in honour of their gods, was a flagrant part of their religion, *&c.* the reaſons for giving theſe commands, commonly called moral, will appear to be the ſame, as for giving the reſt, to wit, to ſettle and eſtabliſh the worſhip of the true, though inviſible God, and to reſtrain from the worſhip of the heavens, and the chief abominations practiſed in that worſhip.

As to the moral or ſocial law, according to our Author, it was not the immediate view or purpoſe of God, in the law given from the mount, to eſtabliſh or explain it. The competition for ſuperiority with the falſe god, the heavens, was the point to be ſettled; and the abominations of the profane worſhip of that fictitious god were to be prohibited, and eradicated out of the ſervice of the children of *Iſrael*.

The ſocial law required no publication, no authority from *Jehovah* by miracles to confirm it; except in thoſe points in which the abſurd ſervice of the heathens had encroached upon it. It was no queſtion amongſt the heathens, no more than it was amongſt the children of *Abraham*, whether it was unlawful to kill, or to commit adultery, on any other occaſion, except to the honour of their pretended deities in religious ſervice; and therefore, according to our Author, there was no occaſion for ſettling theſe ſocial duties, excepting ſo far as the miſtakes in worſhip made it neceſſary.

As the principal view of the decalogue, and all the pomp and train of miracles, with which it was introduced, was to ſettle the ſuperiority of *Jehovah* over his rivals, the heavens; ſo our Author

thor obſerves, that all the memorials of theſe miracles, the ſervices, feaſts, ſabbaths, rites of ſacrifice, ceremonies, the tabernacle, the temple, their ornaments and furniture, the inſtitution of prieſthood, with the ordinances relating thereto, the prieſts garments, *&c.* were intended to commemorate, to acknowledge, and for ever to keep in view the evidence of the ſuperiority then ſettled; and to explain by emblems, a ſort of language then well underſtood, the nature, reſidence, and manner of acting of God, in oppoſition to that of his rivals; and his merciful diſpoſition and purpoſe towards his creatures; all which the Author has in a great meaſure explained, and applied in a very new and ſurpriſing manner, and promiſes, on a proper occaſion, fully to explain and ſhew the application of the reſt.

THOUGH a ſyſtem of philoſophy, religion, and religious ſervice was thus revealed in writing by the hand of *Moſes* in the wilderneſs, as our Author affirms; yet he is far from thinking that the world was left without information, or direction in theſe matters, 'till this time: on the contrary, he aſſerts, that the inſtruction and law, given by *Moſes*, was no more than a republication in writing of that law, originally given to *Adam* before, and upon the fall.

FROM the goodneſs, the wiſdom, and the juſtice of God; from the neceſſities of the new-made creature man, and from the hints above-mentioned, of God's planting a garden in *Eden*, and bringing all living creatures before *Adam*; our Author concludes, that nature, its operations, and dependence on *Jehovah*, was fully explained to the firſt man; and thence his duty, as well as chief good, diſcovered to him, in admiring, adoring, and, with love and gratitude, ſerving the Author of his being.

WHETHER

WHETHER any, and what ſervices, by way of acknowledgment, were at this time required of *Adam*, does not appear; but it does appear that he was prohibited, under the penalty of death, from eating of the fruit of a certain tree in the middle of the garden, which is called *the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.*

OUR Author ſuppoſes that this tree, ſaid to ſtand in the middle of the garden, was in the plan of that garden intended to repreſent the ſun in the centre of this ſyſtem, which keeps it all a going: and that the prohibition to eat the fruit of it emblematically forewarned *Adam* from truſting to its ſupport in any thing, but what, as a machine without knowledge, it was appointed to do; and he ſuſpects that this very forbidden fruit was the *Malum Perſicum*, famed amomgſt the heathens; in *Greece*, afterwards, taken to be the laurel, ſacred to *Apollo* the god of wiſdom, and which was ſuppoſed capable of giving knowledge and wiſdom.

HE obſerves that this command was firſt broken by *Eve*, who had it but at ſecond hand from *Adam*, and who did not know the natures, and ſeveral qualities and capacities of brute creatures, as *Adam* did, at the inſtigation of the devil, by a ſerpent, who as a bait propoſed improvement in knowledge; a very laudable motive, had not the method of gaining it been prohibited.

HE imagines that *Adam* was not deceived as *Eve* was; but that, ſeeing her loſt, his paſſion for her made him deſperately reſolve to ſhare the ſame fortune with her, and to be joined with her in the crime, and the puniſhment; and that this was the reaſon why, when their eyes were opened, they not only became aſhamed of their crime, but at the ſight of thoſe parts, which raiſed in each mutual deſires; the violence of which induced woman to

ſeduce

ſeduce man into a participation of her guilt, and induced man to yield to ruin and death, rather than be divided from her.

Thoſe, who are delighted with ſearching into the origin and uſage of words, will not be diſagreeably entertained by a reflection or two our Author makes, on this occaſion. He ſays that עון *aven*, which properly ſignifies the act of cohabitation with woman, is in the *Hebrew* language made the root for iniquity or wickedneſs. And that פתה *Petah*, which principally ſignifies that part of the body that *Eve* is ſuppoſed to have hid, in the ſame language is made expreſſive of ſeducing, overperſuading, deceiving.

And our Author thinks that, to keep up the memory of this crime, and of the principal motive that induced man to fall into it, as alſo to be a caveat againſt being carried too far by that motive, on future occaſions, circumciſion was inſtituted; which took place amongſt the nations before *Abraham*'s days, and was revived only in his family; and re-enacted in the law of *Moſes*, as ſeveral other antient inſtitutions were.

Our Author inſiſts, that man could not have ſuſtained his life any conſiderable time after the fall, though God had not been pleaſed by any act to inflict death upon him. The conſciouſneſs of the diſpleaſure of God, the remembrance of felicity loſt, and the apprehenſions of the juſt vengeance of the offended Deity, muſt have produced ſtrange diſtractions in the mind of unhappy *Adam*: That he lived then, is a demonſtration that he received ſome comfort, ſome hint of the poſſibility of a reconciliation; and that he actually had promiſes that comforted him, the Scriptures in formal words reveal. *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent.*

Though

THOUGH the account of this promiſe, and thoſe hopes of peace, is very ſhort, yet our Author thinks that, at this time, a proper and intelligible account was given to man of the manner and means of his reconciliation, and reſtitution to the protection of God; and that rites, obſervances, and ſervices were inſtituted, to keep in mind, and acknowledge the ſovereignty of the Creator; the crime of man, and his forfeiture; and the promiſe and means of peace and ſalvation.

THE foundations of his opinion, beſides what is already ſaid, are in general: That from the Scripture it appears, before the publication of the law in *Sinai*, believers and unbelievers were in the practice and poſſeſſion of many, or moſt of theſe rites and inſtitutions, which muſt have depended on ſome antecedent authority, that was common to all. And by the univerſal conſent of all prophane authors it appears, that, after the æra of *Moſes*, the ſame inſtitutions and obſervances had taken place over all the known world; though no body ſuppoſes they owed their origin to the laws of a nation, that the reſt of the world held in diſlike and contempt.

To inſtance in a few: Offering ſacrifice, and that by fire, was in uſe before the written law; *Abel* offered; *Noah* ſacrificed; *Abraham* and his contemporaries did ſo; *Job* practiſed it; it was uſed by *Balaam*; it was practiſed for thankſgiving; for atonement; for binding covenants: at the ſame time it is obvious, that naturally it had no tendency to either of thoſe ends; and, as it was univerſal, muſt needs owe its beginning to an inſtitution, that was authoritative over all.

THAT ſacrifice was held propitiatory among the heathens cannot be denied by any, that is converſant in their writings; their hiſtories, their poems are full of it; and, if there could remain

any

any doubt, *Balaam*'s repeated attempts to placate the deity, and the over-warm zeal of thoſe, who gave the fruit of their body for the ſin of their ſoul, who ſacrificed their firſt-born to *Moloch*, to atone for themſelves, their family, and people, and to procure his favour and protection, are abſolute proofs.

OUR Author, on this ſubject, takes notice, that God is ſaid to have clothed our firſt parents with the ſkins of beaſts, that part of the offering, that by the written law appears to have fallen to the prieſt's ſhare; and thence concludes that the beaſts, from which thoſe ſkins were taken, had been ſacrificed.

ANOTHER inſtance is in firſt-fruits, which appear amongſt all the heathens to have been offered as an acknowledgment to their ſeveral deities. This practice is as old as the days of *Cain* and *Abel*, who cannot be ſuppoſed to have begun it without inſtitution for their authority.

A THIRD inſtance is in the inſtitution of prieſthood, or giving to the firſt-born, or eldeſt of the family, a right to approach the altar, and to offer ſacrifice, which in the *Jewiſh* diſpenſation was changed from the firſt-born to the family of *Levi*. If the prieſt was, in one conſideration, a repreſentation of the ſame perſon, that the ſacrifice repreſented in another, it is reaſonable to conclude, that the inſtitution of prieſthood, and of ſacrifice, bore the ſame date.

FROM the expreſſion, *Gen.* iv. 3. our Author collects, that there were appointed times, perhaps new moons, and ſettled feaſts, from the beginning, for ſacrifice, ſervice, and acknowledgment.

AND from *Moſes*'s account of the creation, and what followed it, nothing is more clear than that the reſt of the ſabbath was from the beginning appointed,

appointed, for preſerving a perpetual memorial of the creation, completed by *Jehovah*; and for yielding to man a fit opportunity, free from labour, toil, and care, to contemplate the high and beneficent attributes of God in his works; and to diſpoſe the mind to acknowledgment, duty, love, praiſe, and adoration, the only tribute that is truly ſuited to the nature of that perfect being; and the only exerciſe that ſeems proper for qualifying man to deſire, and to enjoy a nearer union with his God.

As our Author finds, in the written law, ſeveral particular ſorts of wood, diſtinguiſhed by their uſes in the tabernacle; and ſeveral ſorts of boughs and branches of trees, appointed to be carried and uſed in the feaſt of tabernacles; he concludes, that thoſe trees were in the days of *Adam*, ſo to ſpeak, conſecrated as emblems or memorials of particular perſons, actions, or things, that they were to repreſent.

A GARDEN was planted in *Eden*; and I have hinted at the uſe, for which our Author thinks it was dreſſed there. The patriarchs, particularly *Abraham*, ſacrificed under oaks, nay, planted oaks for the end of ſacrifice and religious ſervice under them. The antients planted gardens, groves, *&c.* upon religious accounts, and very likely held particular trees in reſpect, as repreſenting particular powers or actions.

THE oak, which is in *Hebrew* אֵלָה *Elah*, our Author ſays, was appointed the memorial of a covenant confirmed by oath.

THE tree of knowledge of good and evil repreſented the powers in this ſyſtem. The fruit of the laſt, as our Author ſays, with boughs of the firſt; branches of the palm-tree, and twigs of ſeveral other trees, were to be held in the hands of the children of *Iſrael* at the feaſt of tabernacles,

tabernacles, their grand feſtivity for mirth and rejoicing; and he inſiſts, that the carrying thoſe ſeveral boughs and fruits had a religious, emblematical meaning, then very well underſtood; as it was the only way, before writing, of communicating knowledge; and as intelligible, very near, as writing was afterwards. Becauſe theſe emblems were then ſo fully underſtood, the meaning of them is not by *Moſes* explained; but our Author ſeems to think it poſſible ſtill to decypher and explain them; only thus much he apprehends is plain from the reflection made, that, the uſe of thoſe ſeveral ſorts of trees being preſcribed, without any explication of the reaſon or purpoſe, theſe purpoſes muſt have been univerſally known at the time, and the trees themſelves muſt have been conſtituted emblems, as early as the planting the firſt garden.

As hieroglyphicks, or emblems, were the firſt method of conveying and continuing knowledge, which was ſucceeded by the more perfect invention of writing; and as all religious ſervice was originally performed, in an emblematical way, which carried the mind from the emblem, type, or emblematical or typical act, to the perſon or thing repreſented; our Author thinks, that, after writing was invented, for the more certain preſervation of divine knowledge, the ſervices were ſtill continued, and performed in the old way, and types and emblems were of the ſame uſe and effect as ever; hence ſacrifice, *&c.* were continued: and at the ſame time that God deſcribed the powers of this ſyſtem, as dependent upon himſelf, in writing, he cauſed the ſame ſort of account of them to be repreſented, and hung up hieroglyphically in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple. The lamp in the temple, the pillars, and their ornaments before the porch, our

our Author inſiſts, were an hieroglyphical deſcription of the powers of this ſyſtem, of the deities the heathens adored, which *Jehovah* willed to be nailed up in the place of the reſidence of his preſence, to bear in mind their inferiority and dependence on him; and that they were to be conſidered in no other view than as emblems of himſelf, and his ſervants.

As our Author, by this new and very ſurpriſing manner of interpretation, gives light to an infinite number of inſtitutions, prohibitions, declarations, claims, and ſervices; ſo, by accurately examining the force and propriety of the original language, and comparing it with the inſtitutions and ſervices, when rightly underſtood, he thinks he has made a world of very important diſcoveries.

VARIOUS are the gueſſes that have been made by learned men, concerning the ſenſe and meaning of the word יהוה *Jehovah*, the ineffable name of God, as the *Jews* call it: our Author has fixed on that conſtruction, which makes it the eſſence or ſubſtance, which has being in itſelf neceſſarily, without dependence upon any other, and in diſtinction to all other eſſence or ſubſtance whatever. יה *Jah* ſignifies the eſſence, by eminence; and (if I reach the Author's meaning, which ſeems to be wholly new, and uncommon on this article) by the addition of the other word הוה *Hovah*, ſignifying actual being with powers and faculties, gives an idea of that ſufficient all-perfect being, that has exiſtence in itſelf, or by the neceſſity of its own nature exiſts. Something like to this ingenious moderns have ſtruck out by the light of nature, as they ſay, for the idea of the ſovereign being; and it will be no great reproach to their notion, if it falls in with the ſentiment contained in the name given by God to himſelf

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in the Scripture; nor a ſlight confirmation of the accuracy and perfection of the Scripture, if, when it is fairly examined, it is found to expreſs ſentiments ſo juſt, ſo lofty, and ſo difficult, if at all poſſible, to be come at by the light of nature only.

אל *EL* is another name, which the Scripture gives to the Deity; it commonly is tranſlated *the ſtrong*, or *powerful*, *fortis*. But our Author inſiſts, that it ſignifies properly the irradiator. An idea borrowed from that irradiation or emiſſion of light and influence from the ſun to move, ſupport, and preſerve in being and action every thing in this material ſyſtem; from whence it is applied to the Deity, to expreſs ſomething of that inconceivable power, influence, and manner of acting, by which the Deity acts uncontroulably, where it is not locally preſent. As the Author from Scripture avers the proper reſidence of God is without this ſyſtem, ſo that, by this name, that irradiation, which, according to our Author's philoſophy, is in a great meaſure the ſupporter of nature, is attributed to *Jehovah*; and ſuch a power of irradiation in a ſpiritual ſenſe, as we ſee performed by the ſun in a material way, is aſcribed to the inviſible God.

To confirm this ſentiment, and indeed a very conſiderable branch of our Author's ſcheme, he obſerves that the word הללו־יה *Hallelu-jah*, which is the burden of almoſt all the pſalms of praiſe and thankſgiving, the firſt word frequently and the laſt, and which is tranſlated ſometimes, *praiſe ye the Lord*, ſometimes is tranſcribed, without tranſlating, *Hallelu-jah*, ſignifies properly and undoubtedly irradiation to *Jah*, or aſcribe ye irradiation to the eſſence. Now, if the utmoſt honour the believing *Jews* could expreſs for their God, in their moſt devout and thankful praiſes, was to aſcribe irradiation to his eſſence; it, on the one hand,

hand, renders our Author's opinion of the ſenſe of *El* very probable; and, on the other hand, very ſtrongly proves, that the Scripture-ideas of the Deity, and of its powers and action, were borrowed from viſible operations of the ſun, the light, and air, and their actions in the heavens in all this material ſyſtem.

THERE is ſtill another name for God, the moſt commonly uſed of any in Scripture, and on the true ſenſe of which our Author builds a great deal; it is אלהים *Elohim*, always tranſlated *Deus*, or God.

ALL the world, *Jews* and *Chriſtians*, agree that this word is plural; ſeldom, not once in five hundred times, to be met with ſingular; almoſt always (a few inſtances excepted) joined with nouns and verbs in the ſingular number.

FROM this word, which the modern *Jews*, and, after them, *Chriſtians* have tranſlated *Deus*, in the ſingular number, when the true God is meant; but *Dii*, in the plural, when it is applied to the gods of the nations; ſeveral learned men have drawn arguments from the Trinity, and have taken it to be a full proof, at leaſt, of the plurality of perſons. But, as theſe men did not aſſert, or undertake to prove, that the Scriptures were wrote with perfect accuracy, and were forced to admit a great many things to be written, that they could not ſtrictly and philoſophically juſtify; and as they pretended to fix no certain origin or ſenſe for the word, from the meaning whereof their argument could be examined or juſtified; theſe opinions made no great way to induce men to think, that the doctrine of the Trinity was founded in the Old Teſtament.

BUT, as our Author inſiſts, that every word of the ſacred book is written with the utmoſt accuracy, truth, and perfection; if that propoſition is made

made good, what he says for the word *Elohim*, for evidence of the plurality of persons in the Deity, must have great weight.

NOTWITHSTANDING an infinity of guesses made by those, who pretended to be learned in the *Hebrew* language, none ever hit on any thing that carried a sense, in the least degree, satisfactory. Our Author has fixed on the word אלה *Elah*, an oath or adjuration (so translated perpetually by the *Jews*, wherever it occurs in the Scriptures, whether as verb or noun, except where it is intended to signify the Deity, and then they take care to hide that meaning) as the root from which it is derived; and affirms, that by the genius of the language אלהים *Elohim* signifies in the plural, *Adjuratores*, persons bound by oath or covenant; referring this name to that engagement, which the divine persons are supposed to have entered into, for the preservation and salvation of man, called the covenant; and averring, that it is expressive of that relation, in which that oath or covenant put God to man.

HE insists, that, as this was the original light, in which, after the fall, God was willing to be known to man, for his comfort, and for encouraging him in his duty, all the apostate Heathens, who relinquished the true *Elohim*, and resorted to their rivals, the heavens, for protection, retained nevertheless this comfortable appellation, applied it to the heavens, and, as they sacrificed with the utmost zeal and seriousness to them, looked upon them as their *Elohim*; all-powerful-beings, in covenant with them, for their good here and hereafter, and expected certainly from their hands protection and performance of their supposed covenants: hence by innumerable places in Scripture it appears, that they looked upon themselves as bound never to relinquish their *Elohim*; and verily

rily believed that their *Elohim*, in their turn, were bound never to deſert them.

It is remarkable, that, of the many names, which the Deity has in Scripture, this is the only one, which concerns the ſalvation of man, that the Heathens carried off with them to apply to their falſe gods; for whom they coined their additional, or diſtinguiſhing names, without number, according to their different humours, and the different powers and attributes of the heavens, for which they worſhipped them. But ſtill, with all theſe, they mixed the character or appellation of *Elohim*, as what expreſſed their connexion with, and relation to them.

And, if this term ſhall be allowed to mean perſons bound by oath or covenant, then it will fit kings or governors, who were under ſuch ties and engagements to the people; and to them it is ſometimes applied in Scripture.

At whatever time the *Jews* thought fit firſt to tranſlate this word ſingular, it is certain the Heathens retained it in the plural ſenſe; and the *Jews*, when tranſlating that word applied to the Heathen gods, render it plural.

Our Author obſerves, that the word *Elohim* is generally joined with verbs and nouns in the ſingular number; yet ſometimes the words joined with it determine the ſenſe ſo flatly to be plural, that, without impropriety, ſuch as is no where to be met with in the ſacred book, the perſons, or things ſpoken of muſt neceſſarily be plural.

In the conſultation that is repreſented to have been had by the *Elohim*, for the formation of man, in the firſt of *Geneſis*, *The* Elohim *ſaid, Let us make man in our own image, according to our ſimilitudes.*

And, *Geneſis* iii. 22. after man had eaten of the forbidden fruit, the *Elohim* ſays, *Behold man is be-*

come like one of us. The meaning of the expreſſion and in what ſenſe man was become like one of the *Elohim*, our Author, on another occaſion, endeavours to explain: but from theſe, and ſuch-like flat declarations of more perſons than one in the *Elohim*, he inſiſts it is beyond doubt, that the word is intentionally uſed plural.

On this ſubject he makes great uſe of the repreſentatives of the *Elohim*, the *Shemim*, the names the powers in the machine, the heavens, being plural; and thoſe powers being, according to his apprehenſion, juſt three, fire, light, and ſpirit, or air: and, it is ſuppoſed, that theſe three powers ſupport all the motions and actions, in this machine, and that the machine was given for a repreſentation of the Deity, its nature, manner of exiſtence, powers and actions, by itſelf; it is very difficult to call in doubt our Author's concluſion, that the one ſubſtance of the heavens, acting in three conditions, or with diſtinct powers, is expreſſive of the one eſſence and perſonality of the *Elohim*.

And, indeed, to do our Author's argument juſtice, ſuppoſing the received opinion of a Trinity in the Deity were to be illuſtrated, or repreſented, by the ſimilitude of any viſible, or conceivable object; it muſt be confeſſed, that the wit of man has not hitherto ſuggeſted any thing ſo fit, to throw light upon that high myſtery, as this ſuppoſed machine; if the Author can make it good that nature is actually ſupported by the agency of matter in thoſe three conditions of fire, light, and ſpirit, or air. The unity of the machine, the co-operation or joint action of all the three powers; light the iſſue of fire, and yet coëval with it, returning ſpirit or air to maintain the joint action and by it every thing, is ſo exquiſite a picture of what hitherto has been thought to ſurpaſs all imagination

gination, that, if the Author can maintain that his machine works by theſe powers, very few will doubt of the truth of what it was intended to repreſent.

THAT the Deity, and the ſeveral perſons in it, are in numberleſs expreſſions of Scripture, uniformly repreſented by the machine, and by theſe three powers in it, applying the idea of fire to the firſt, the idea of light to the ſecond, and of air or ſpirit to the third, the Author endeavours to prove by a world of quotations.

HE does not forget the frequent appearances of the Deity, in form of fire, often attended with light, and air, or cloud: he takes notice of the many deſcriptions of the firſt perſon as terrible; a jealous God; the avenger of ſin; a flaming, a conſuming, a devouring fire to the workers of iniquity: and has collected a liſt of the various temples, that the heathens had, to the ſun, to fire, or to the heavens, under that head or attribute.

WITH reſpect to light, he produces numerous paſſages, where light, repreſented or ſpoken of, ſeems properly applicable to that perſon, who was to be the light of the nations, who was repreſented by irradiation; and, perhaps, praiſed or prayed for in the expreſſion *Hallelujah*; and who declared formally of himſelf, that he was the light.

AND, on this ſubject, our Author has one very uncommon reflexion, as almoſt all his are; he ſays the word כהן *Coben*, tranſlated *Prieſt*, and to which no one has pretended to affix a determined meaning, ſignifies properly an interceſſor; and, in evidence of this, he has produced ſeveral texts, and particularly two, where the children of *David* are ſaid to be his כהנים *Cohenim*, meaning interceſſors with him, it not being poſſible they could be prieſts, ſince they were not of the tribe of *Levi*.

AFTER eſtabliſhing that the word rendered prieſt ſignifies interceſſor, he proceeds to obſerve, that the high prieſt was only ſuch, and employed in offering ſacrifice, as the repreſentative of him, concerning whom *Jehovah* ſwore, that he was a prieſt, or interceſſor, for ever, after the order of *Melchizedek*.

AND then, to make that type or repreſentation more entire, our Author obſerves that the high prieſt, in office, was to wear garments made by divine direction, emblematical in every particular of his office; but more eſpecially in that they were to be of white, that is linen, and gold, and purple, and ſcarlet; by that collection of colours expreſſing light, the badge or repreſentation of the ſecond perſon of the Deity.

THIS, as well as the crown that the prieſt wore, expreſſing irradiation, as before mentioned, our Author thinks, was certainly underſtood at the time of the inſtitution, and by believers down till the days of our Saviour; and, had it been generally then underſtood, the nation would not have rejected the light. But, as the *Jewiſh* people univerſally apoſtatiſed, loſt their knowledge with their faith, and had the remains of it almoſt altogether extinguiſhed in the captivity; they had leiſure to frame notions of the Meſſiah, different from what the Scriptures exhibited; and in the conſtructions of the Scriptures, which they did not underſtand, they impoſed on themſelves, and on all that truſted them.

TO the light, our Author ſhews, there were ſeveral temples amongſt the Heathens.

TOUCHING the third perſon, our Author produces ſeveral texts, where he is formally ſpoken of, under the deſcription of רוח *Ruach*, *Ventus*, *Flatus*, *Spiritus*, the Spirit of *Jehovah*. And from the Heathens religion and opinions he obſerves, that

that they imputed all their advices, from their gods, to the ſpirit, to ſome material inſpiration or inflation; all their Sibyls, the prieſteſſes that delivered their oracles, were ſuppoſed, in effect, to be blown up, and inflated by ſome ſpirit or wind. And it may be conſidered, whether it is of any conſequence, and of what, that they delivered their anſwers from tripodes.

But not to purſue, at any greater length, the numerous and the various authorities that our Author brings together to ſupport his argument, it merits reflexion, that, when our Saviour ſpeaks of himſelf, as the light, and when he and his Apoſtles deliver the doctrine of the Trinity in the New Teſtament, they ſpeak of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, without any apology or explication, as a matter very well known or underſtood by ſuch as underſtood the Scriptures; a thing, which it ſeems altogether impoſſible they could have fallen into, if they had not known that ſuch, as really knew the Scriptures, underſtood them; as our Saviour ſays, on other occaſions, *Matthew* xi. 15. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

As our Author has puſh'd his argument for the Trinity very far, from the notion of fire, light, and ſpirit; ſo he lays great weight on another argument, not altogether unlike to that, drawn from the appearance of the Cherubim, ſet up at the expulſion of *Adam* from Paradiſe, and from the deſcription of that repreſentation or appearance, drawn from the firſt and tenth chapters of the prophecies of *Ezekiel.*

From the viſions of *Ezekiel* he collects, that the form of the Cherubim was one figure, with four heads or faces; the face of an ox, the face of a lion, the face of a man, and the face of an eagle.

HAD there been no more joined but the face of the ox, the lion, and the eagle, as the Author can prove that the ox repreſented fire, the lion light, and the eagle ſpirit, or air, there could be no doubt, he ſays, that this would have been a proper repreſentation of the Trinity in the heavens; and, by conſequence, of the inviſible Trinity by them repreſented.

BUT, as the face of a man was added; joined, as the prophet takes notice, to the face of the lion, the repreſentative of light, the ſecond perſon; our Author inſiſts, that this appearance, exhibited to man for his comfort, juſt when for his ſin he was expelled Paradiſe, and ſentenced to hard labour, repreſented the Trinity, with the man Chriſt Jeſus joined to the ſecond perſon, and was the moſt complete emblematical repreſentation of what our Author ſuppoſes God revealed to *Adam*, when he told him, that *the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the head of the ſerpent.*

AGAIN, this repreſentation in the Cherubim was a thing ſo well known and underſtood by the antients, though we have deſcription of it but in *Ezekiel*'s viſion, that, when the Lord commanded it to be made for the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, the workmen made it at once, without wanting a pattern: and our Author lays no ſmall weight on it, that figures of theſe Cherubims (and he ſays he can ſhew why there were two of them) were, beſides the ark of the teſtimony, and the mercy-ſeat, the only furniture of the moſt holy place; into which none but the repreſentative of the great interceſſor durſt ever enter; and that but once a year, cloathed with the emblems of his office, and being ſanctified by blood.

As our Author is indefatigably induſtrious in his ſearch after the true meaning of emblems, inſtitutions, and ſervices; he is no leſs ſo, in

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ſettling the meaning of words, hitherto miſtaken, or unknown. I ſhall give you but one inſtance.

THE word ברית *Berith*, which we always tranſlate *Covenant*, *Fœdus*, occurs in ſeveral texts; and is generally coupled with ſuch words, as cannot ſuffer a man to believe that *Covenant*, *Fœdus*, is its original ſignification.

The blood of the covenant; *the meſſenger of the covenant*; *I have given thee for a covenant to the nations*, &c. are expreſſions that will hardly go down; and what we tranſlate *making a covenant*, כרת ברית *Karat Berith*, moſt certainly ſignifies *to kill*, or *cut off Berith*; which ſhews to conviction that *Berith* muſt, at leaſt originally, have had another ſenſe than is now in the tranſlation given it.

OUR Author, ſearching to be ſatisfied in this difficulty, finds two texts, where the very ſame letters that compoſe *Berith*, but differently pointed by the *Jews*, are tranſlated *Soap* [*Borith*, as they point it] *Fullonum*; and this word, again, confeſſedly derived from ברר *Barar*, which ſignifies *to cleanſe*, *to purify*.

IF then, ſays our Author, *Berith* is taken from the idea of purifying, it muſt, and may, from the genius of the language, carry the ſenſe of purifier, purification throughout.

AND, if it is ſo underſtood, then all the texts, in which it occurs, will be intelligible, and determined to that important ſenſe, in which they were written.

I HAVE given thee for a purifier to the nations; *the blood of the purifier*; *the meſſenger of the purifier*; will all directly refer to the great ſacrifice, the purification to which our divines, without obſerving the rules of conſtruction, and by very hardy figures, apply them.

AND *Karat Berith* will ſignify, in its proper and primary ſenſe, to cut off a, or the purifier, and not to cut off a covenant.

Our Author affirms, that, in the uſage of the *Hebrew* tongue, nothing is more certain, or frequent, than that the type or emblem gets and bears the name of the thing typified and repreſented, or principally meant: wherefore, if Chriſt was the purifier, the *Berith* promiſed, every creature, whoſe blood was ſhed, as repreſenting him, in ſacrifice, might have had the name of *Berith*. And, when ſuch a creature was killed or cut off, as an emblem, it was true that *Berith* was cut off or killed.

AND as man, entering into covenant, that is, accepting of terms offered by God for his purification, in token of his acceptance, was to kill, and ſhed the blood of a type of the great purifier; which blood, though but of the lamb, a type, was deemed holy, and capable of ſanctifying and purifying the altar, the tabernacle, the prieſt, and every thing that it touched: the ſame ſymbolical act was repeated for confirming pactions, covenants, or agreements between men; a typical *Berith* was cut off; and over ſacrifice men confirmed covenants, and accepted of the terms propoſed by each other, as they teſtified their engagements to God, and their faith that he was bound to them, by the ſame typical repreſentation.

NOR will this conſtruction appear ſtrange to thoſe, who reflect that, in the *Latin* tongue, *percutere*, *icere*, and *ferire fœdus*, are the terms uſed for making a covenant or alliance; in reſpect to which, etymologiſts ſatisfy themſelves with ſaying, that, ſlaying ſome animal in ſacrifice being a ſolemnity that attended all alliances, at the making whereof, the parties were willing to intimate, by

by the death of the victim, the puniſhment they thus conſented to be bound to, if they violated the agreement, the words *ferire fœdus* were brought to be expreſſive of the end or purpoſe, for which ſuch animals were ſlain at treaties and alliances; and they ſuppoſe that *fœdus*, may have been the antient *Tuſcan* word for *hœdus, a kid.*

But, if they will depart from ſuppoſitions, without any proof, and mount a little higher in their antiquity; if they will admit, what our Author thinks he has proved, that all the religious ſervices of the Heathens were taken from the inſtitutions and appointments in the ſervice of the living God; though by length of time, change of language, and imaginations, when men, having loſt true knowledge, began to imagine, they were miſapplied, and, in part, altered; they will find reaſon to believe that, even amongſt the Heathens, ſacrifice, as the higheſt and moſt important act of their religious worſhip, was adhibited to covenants, as an appeal to their deities; and putting all they expected, from that ſymbol of their religion, on the iſſue of their faithful performance of their engagements.

In the *Hobrew* language, the ſame word חטא *Aſhem* ſignifies *ſin*, and a *ſin-offering*, a kid, lamb, or any thing offered for ſin; and the Heathens made it a name or attribute of one of their *Elohim.*

It does not appear, ſo far as I know, that *fœdus*, in the antient *Tuſcan*, was written for *hœdus*; but it does appear, that the *Latin* has an adjective of the ſame letters, *fœdus, a, um*, which ſignifies *vile, unclean, abominable*, and *polluted.* Now, if with them, at the firſt formation of their language, an offering for ſin or pollution could be called ſin or pollution, as in *Hebrew* a kid or lamb offered for חטא *Aſhem* is called *Aſhem*; I ſee no

reaſon to doubt, that every offering for ſin or pollution might be called *fœdus*, or *fœdum*, in the ſenſe of that word adjective; and that therefore *ferire fœdus*, in its proper and primitive ſenſe, was *to kill*, or *ſacrifice a ſin-offering*.

But, be this as it will, our Author diſcovers ſeveral temples, amongſt the Heathens, to *Berith*, and to *Baal Berith*, by which he ſays is meant the Lord, the Purifier, the early Heathens having by no means loſt the idea, or the expectation of a purification.

And he ſays that ſalt, a neceſſary ingredient in all ſacrifice, was adhibited and required in this view only, as an emblem of purification; ſalt being one of the moſt powerful purifiers known; and of approved uſe in purging and purifying moſt ſorts of metals from their earth, and baſe droſs, that cloſely adheres to them.

When Freethinkers object to the evidence, drawn from prophecies and prophetical inſtitutions, for ſupporting the Chriſtian religion, that it is ambiguous and uncertain; the prophecies being dark and obſcure, capable often of a double meaning; and the inſtitutions being figurative and typical, applicable only, *ex poſt facto*, by compariſon of the figures with the events; and therefore not fit to communicate, with any certainty, to thoſe to whom the revelation was made, the knowledge of the event, which they were to expect, and in which they were to believe: the common anſwer is, that we are not, from our narrow views, and with our dim lights, to examine and to find fault with the diſpoſition of the infinitely-wiſe being, purely, becauſe we cannot aſſign reaſons, that to us ſeem adequate, for the conduct he has been pleaſed to hold: that it has pleaſed God to convey ſuch intimations of the, then future, advent of the Meſſiah to the *Iſraelites*,

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in the law, and by the prophets, as were, when the event prefigured happened, full and diſtinct proof, that *Jeſus* was the perſon intended, and the ſyſtem of religion, delivered by him, the future law and faith to which all mankind was to be ſubject; and that, theſe things being admitted, it is preſumptuous to enquire why the Deity, in infinite wiſdom, thought fit to convey this knowledge, and theſe intimations, in prophecies and inſtitutions, which, at the beginning, and before the advent of our Saviour, were wrapt up deſignedly in myſtery and figures. And ſome people even venture to gueſs at probable cauſes, for the delivering and keeping this knowledge in this manner, 'till after our Saviour's paſſion.

But, if our Author's ſcheme for interpreting the Scriptures is true, the whole objection falls at once to the ground; becauſe theſe emblems and figures, as well as many expreſſions called figurative, though dark, obſcure, and uncertain to us (who have loſt the knowledge of the language, as well as of the emblems) yet were not ſo to them, to whom the revelation was made, and who, by thoſe emblems, and by that language, underſtood as clearly what was foretold to happen, at the diſtance of many centuries, and therefore as diſtinctly believed in it, as we, at the diſtance of ſo many ages after the event, upon the relation in a language we underſtand, know and believe that *Jeſus* actually came, and fulfilled the will of God, and the predictions concerning him.

And, if this be ſo, it will be eaſily underſtood, why the faith of *Abraham* and others, who preceded the days of our Saviour, is ſo highly commended by St. *Paul*.

If the *Iſraelites*, to whom the law was delivered, underſtood the language, the inſtitutions, the

the emblems, as our Author does, they certainly muſt have known that, in due time, God intended to ſend a Meſſiah to the world, under the ſuffering character that *Jeſus* bore; and they muſt have believed it would be ſo, becauſe of the marks of divinity attending the revelation, which they were eye-witneſſes to. The language, in which we are told of that event, after it happened, is no more preciſe and diſtinct, than that, formerly uſed, was to them; and, if we have not ſeen the miracles with our own eyes, we ſee thoſe prophecies delivered to them, and have authentic records of the completion of them, which does no more than put us on a level with them, in point of evidence, or cauſe of belief.

They, indeed, at the publication of the law could not tell (ſo far as we ſee) how many ages, or years, the event was diſtant; as we, who have come after it, can. But, when the advent became nearer, and when the impreſſion of the firſt revelation became fainter, in the days of *Daniel*, they were brought more upon a level with us, even in that reſpect; and were told, to a day, when they were to look for the completion of their hopes.

It is not to be denied that this revelation, however clear in itſelf, became obſcure, before the coming of the Meſſiah: the means, by which this was brought about, our Author has explained: and very noble ends may be aſſigned, for which it may have been permitted to be ſo, by the divine wiſdom and goodneſs; without impeaching the certainty of the proof of the Chriſtian religion from prophecies and prophetick inſtitutions; and without ſuffering the divine goodneſs to lie under the imputation that would attend the ſuppoſition, that the revelation of God was not full, and com-

plete

plete to mankind, and did not inſtruct them ſufficiently for their conduct, their faith, and their comfort.

I HAVE ſelected theſe few hints from amidſt an infinity of other very various obſervations and diſcoveries, which the Author has, without ſeeming very ſolicitous about what is called method or order, brought together. And I have ranged them in ſuch order, as ſeemed to me the moſt proper to let you eaſily into the Author's ſentiments, ſo far as I underſtand them.

IF YOUR LORDSHIP will judge of them fairly, and after due examination, you muſt enquire after them in the original; where you will find many proofs and arguments, that my meaſure of ſearching does not ſufficiently come up to, employed for illuſtrating each particular, beſides what I have curſorily ſtated in theſe pages.

I HAVE loſt my labour, if YOUR LORDSHIP does not think theſe matters highly worth looking into; and, from your learning and candor, I promiſe myſelf that, if you do, thoſe, who are in the ſame low rank of learning with me, will have great obligations to you for letting them know how they are to form their judgment upon matters that ſeem to concern them and mankind ſo much.

IN the treatiſe, laſt publiſhed, *Of power eſſential and mechanical*, our Author, amongſt other very curious and ſurpriſing things, undertakes to confute Sir *I*—— *N*——'s principles of gravity, attraction, infinite vacuity, and projection, which, he ſays, are not only unmechanical, but contradictory to the nature and idea of material ſubſtance, and impoſſible and abſurd. And he pretends to prove, by different editions of Sir *I*—'s works, and from different paſſages in them, that he

he has at different times varied and changed his own opinions; and, in effect, as our Author calls it, given up his own principles, which are untenible. In this laſt treatiſe our Author mixes, with his reflexions againſt Sir *I*—— and the late Dr. *C*——, a degree of bitterneſs and ſeverity that muſt be diſagreeable to many, and which nothing can excuſe, but a zeal for the honour of religion, which in him ſeems to be very ſtrong and ſincere.

I am, My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Moſt Obedient,

Humble Servant.

REFLEXIONS

ON THE SOURCES OF

INCREDULITY

With regard to

RELIGION.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Treatiſe was left imperfect by the author, a late eminent lawyer; who was no leſs conſpicuous for his zeal in the cauſe of Religion, than for his ſincere love of juſtice, and an invariable attachment to the laws of his country, in the ſeveral high ſtations he filled with applauſe. That it is unfiniſhed, was occaſioned by his death, an event univerſally lamented: that it is now publiſhed, is owing to ſome of his friends; who were willing to believe, that even a fragment by ſo maſterly a hand may not be an unacceptable preſent to the publick.

REFLEXIONS ON INCREDULITY.

IT is raſh to affirm, that the univerſe, or even the ſolar ſyſtem, was made principally for the ſake of the earth, or of man; becauſe, for ought we know, there may be many more, and more conſiderable uſes for it. It is at the ſame time not certain, at leaſt to me it does not appear to be ſo, that there was any other uſe for creating theſe immenſe heavenly bodies, but to regulate the motion of the earth; to produce the other effects which ſome of them evidently have, and all of them in a greater or ſmaller proportion may have, on the earth; and to raiſe in man that idea of the magnificence, power, and ſkill of the Creator, which the contemplation of the immenſity, motion, order, beauty, and utility, of theſe bodies muſt produce.

IT is becauſe we know not whether thoſe bodies are inhabited, that we cannot pronounce, that the utility they bring us is, or is not, the only end of creating them. If they are inhabited, the inhabitants muſt be of a texture very different from thoſe of the earth. But we cannot deem it impoſſible, that beings may have been made,

made, fit to reſide, to act, and to think, in the very centre, as well as on the ſurface of the ſun.

But, without determining that queſtion, which the ſcantineſs of our lights will not permit us to decide; it is obvious, that, beſides the phyſical influence which theſe bodies may have on the earth, and on us, it muſt have been one, and that no inconſiderable end of the making them, to help man to ſuch an idea as has been mentioned of the Creator.

It is raſh to ſay, that any one part of the furniture of this earth is uſeleſs; that there is not ſome utility in the various ſoils and metals; or that the different plants, inſects, reptiles, fiſh, fowls, quadrupeds, are not neceſſary for certain purpoſes, though we have not yet diſcovered them. Who will deny uſefulneſs to poiſonous plants; or dare affirm that moths, rats, toads, vipers, and other vermin, have not been intended for proper and fit uſes? It is bold to aſſert, that the leaſt animalcule diſcovered by the microſcope has not its proper uſe in nature.

It ſeems unreaſonable to ſay, that God framed all the ornaments of this earth, to ſatisfy himſelf that he could do it ſince he perfectly knew that he could do every thing that does not involve contradiction.

But, as the whole frame of this earth, ſo far as we know it, and every plant and living creature that are ſupported by it, are, to man, ſtrict and very obvious demonſtrations of the power and wiſdom of the Creator; as the œconomy and diſpoſition of the whole is of his goodneſs; it ſeems reaſonable to conclude, that one, poſſibly the chief end of creating thoſe things, was, to ſhew God to man.

Most of the productions of the earth are, one way or another, for the uſe of animals. Many animals are the food of other animals; and, to be ſure, ſo intended by the Maker. Man, as an animal,

mal, has his ſhare of the leguminous, as well as of animal food. Every living creature wants nouriſhment, and finds it ready provided; but all have not eyes to ſee the bountiful hand that reaches it. Man has his proviſion in common with the other animals; but then he has eyes that may, and, if he do not ſhut them, muſt ſee the hand from which it comes. On the brute, therefore, who cannot know his benefactor, there is no obligation to duty or gratitude; on man, who may and ought to know, there is and muſt be. Why then may it not be fairly concluded, that one of the chief ends of crowding the earth with ſo many wonders of the vegetable and animal kind, is, to fill the head of man with admiration, and his heart with gratitude?

It is raſh to ſay, that the bee knows, or makes uſe of any geometrical principles in the formation of its hexagonal cells; or that it is from any phyſical knowledge of the properties of flowers, that it is directed to cull the ſweets that yield its honey from ſome, neglecting others. It is raſh to affirm, that the various tribes of ſpiders conſider, and, from reflexion and by mechanical rules, frame thoſe nets of different forms and ſizes, that catch their vagrant prey. It is raſh to ſuppoſe, that the ſwallows, the crows, the magpies, frame their neſts, and make choice of that ſituation, from any antecedent reaſoning what is fitteſt to be done, or from any architectonical notions. It is neither reflexion nor hunger that moves the cat to lie in wait ſo patiently, and ſo attentively, for the mouſe or the rat. Theſe actions they exert, probably becauſe they are directed by their frame to exert them; and to that diſpoſition we give the name of *Inſtinct*.

It is falſe to ſay, that men deſire to eat and drink, from knowing that doing ſo is neceſſary to preſerve

preſerve their lives; or that they have a deſire for the other ſex, from a deſign of propagating the ſpecies. Theſe diſpoſitions flow from their make: they hunger, they thirſt, they luſt, whether they would, or would not. In theſe things, and ſome others, they are moved by their frame as brutes are.

But, laying aſide theſe natural, or rather mechanical diſpoſitions, man compared with brutes is much at a loſs, except in ſo far as reaſon and reflexion come to his aſſiſtance. He has no inſtinct to determine him what to eat, what to avoid eating. It is but a ſmall part of the globe, if any, that can afford man fruits or legumens to ſupport him the whole year round. His make is not fit for catching animals to live on, were he naturally carnivorous. No inſtinct, ſuch as appears in other animals, direct him to this or that ſort of habitation; and, were he not directed by experience and reflexion, he muſt quickly periſh.

Man comes into the world much more helpleſs, and continues ſo much longer, than any other animal we know. Without the care of his parents he muſt be ſoon loſt; and without the inſtruction which their experience enables them to afford his reaſon, he muſt continue miſerable, until his own experience and obſervation yield matter for his reaſon to work on. He therefore was evidently ſo framed, as to be obliged to follow reaſon for his guide; whereas all the other animals had their guide in their texture and conſtitution.

No animal but man wants clothing, other than nature has provided for it. Man can hardly live in any part of the globe, unleſs he find clothing for himſelf.

No animal but man ſtands in need of cookery, or any other preparation for his food, but what it has from nature. Man muſt prepare every thing almoſt,

almoſt, except fruits and legumens, before they are fit for his ſervice. Grain muſt be ground and baked; all ſort of meat muſt be altered in its condition by fire; and I doubt ſalt muſt by induſtry be found or made, before the nouriſhment be proper for man.

No climate yields ſpontaneouſly food ſufficient for man, though all do for the brutes that inhabit them. Man does not cultivate the ground, nor find ſupplies for his wants, from inſtinct, but from obſervation and reaſoning.

Reason in him muſt anſwer the end of inſtinct in brutes. He ſees trees and all vegetables ſpring from ſeeds; if he would have plenty, he muſt plant or ſow. He ſees grains and fruits fall and periſh, unleſs they are gathered and preſerved; and he ſees the ant induſtriouſly gathering and laying up ſtores. Theſe obſervations muſt lead him to produce and ſave corn, *&c.* Cold makes clothing neceſſary; the ſpider's thread and web furniſh matter for his fancy, and ſpinning and weaving are invented. Floods, and ſtorms, and winter make ſhelter neceſſary. The ſwallow makes uſe of morter, the crow of ſticks, for its neſt: man's invention improves on their inſtinct; at firſt huts riſe, and at laſt palaces.

Instinct carries brutes no farther than to what is fit and neceſſary: Reaſon carries man ſo far; but then it, or at leaſt it prompted by vanity, carries him much farther. In place of warm clothing, which nature requires, vanity will have it rich and gaudy. The bluſh of the roſe, the plume of the peacock, and the ſhining wing of the butterfly, muſt be imitated to deck our fine Ladies, and our much finer young Gentlemen. In place of convenient manſions, we muſt have ſumptuous palaces, cruſted with marble, and ſhining with gold. In place of food fitted for our ſtomachs

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by roaſting and boiling, we run into the moſt ridiculous gratification of extravagant taſte, by unnatural mixtures, that diſtreſs the ſtomach. And, in place of uſing wine, and ſtrong drink, our own invention, for neceſſary purpoſes, if any ſuch there are, we make them the inſtruments of debauch, the means of debaſing our underſtanding, and deſtroying our health.

HAPPY brutes! unhappy man! Their inſtinct carries them to what is fit and convenient for them; but it carries them no farther; it leads them to nothing that undoes them. His reaſon ſupplies in him the lack of inſtinct, and leads him to every thing that is neceſſary or convenient; nay, bounds him to that, when duly made uſe of. His reaſon, beſides ſupplying the place of inſtinct, was clearly intended for opening to him a ſcene of very delightful employment; the contemplation of the works of God, the reflexion on his boundleſs might, wiſdom, and goodneſs, and the enjoyment of his favour. But unluckily this laſt has long ceaſed to be any part of his buſineſs. His reaſon is made uſe of indeed, by all means, whether right or wrong, to purchaſe things neceſſary and convenient; but he does not ſtop there. He ſeldom ever makes uſe of it to prevent the abuſe of theſe conveniences: on the contrary, he employs it in contriving means to raiſe and to gratify unnatural appetites, by which his conſtitution is hurt. And he ſeems to have no other view in the conduct of his life, but to ſatisfy thoſe vitious and deſtructive inclinations, which he himſelf has raiſed, and ſubſtituted in the room of thoſe which reaſon was intended to lead him to.

BRUTES are by nature ſufficiently ſupplied with neceſſaries, and with inſtinct to teach them to make uſe of them; and, if they had eyes to ſee the Author of nature, they ſurely would be thankful.

thankful. Man is richly ſupplied by nature; and, in place of inſtinct, has reaſon to teach him to apply to his uſe and convenience what nature has produced. He has beſides eyes to ſee the Author of nature, and of his bleſſings, the giver of that reaſon that helps him to turn the product of the earth to his account; and he has in his make a diſpoſition to gratitude, as well as he knows, that acknowledgment, thankfulneſs, and compliance with the will of his maker and benefactor, is his duty. But, alas! how ſeldom does he ſuffer that diſpoſition to be brought by reaſon to act? How little is he employed in thinking on nature, with a view to diſcover and admire its Author? and how ſmall is his concern for the will, for the honour of that Being, by whoſe power and bounty he ſubſiſts?

Because he can raiſe plants, and gather fruits and ſeeds; becauſe he can convert theſe ſeeds and fruits into bread and wine; becauſe he can manufacture ſilk, wool, and flax; becauſe he can ſmelt minerals, and produce a ſort of new ſpecies of metals; and becauſe he can, by making uſe of his reaſon, procure a vaſt variety of gratifications to his taſte, and to his vanity; he forgets the Being whoſe gift that reaſon was: he is apt to look upon himſelf as the creator of all thoſe things that afford him ſubſiſtence or gratification, and on them as his creatures: he thinks it lawful to make uſe of his own to any exceſs: and he at laſt drops into an opinion, that true felicity conſiſts in the gratification of all appetites, at any expence, without regard to right or wrong; and that every thing that may ſafely be done to compaſs that gratification, is lawful.

When this comes to be the ſettled diſpoſition of the mind; when the bias of the heart is the gratification of all luſts and appetites; when the gratification of theſe luſts and appetites is directly

adverſary

adverſary to what right reaſon ſays is the will of God, and inconſiſtent with what it ſays would have been our chief felicity, even in this life, had we purſued it; no one can wonder, that right reaſon is not conſulted, or its voice liſtened unto; or that the crowd, eſpecially of the giddy and vitious, ſhun all correſpondence with reaſon, all ſort of meditation; and in place thereof, when they are ſatiated with the gratification of groſſer appetites for the time, and cannot proceed farther in the enjoyment, they take up with play, or other the moſt ſilly, if not offenſive, amuſements, rather than be left alone in the hands of their own conſcience and reflexions.

THUS has reaſon, the higheſt gift that God has been pleaſed to beſtow on men, by perverſity of fooliſh guilty man, become the inſtrument of his miſery. Reaſon was given him, in place of inſtinct, to direct his choice; which was left free, that he might deſerve, and be rewarded for doing well: Reaſon was given, to guard him againſt the prevalence of luſt and appetites, and to lead him to the chief felicity his nature was capable of: Reaſon was given, to let him ſee the order, the beauty, and the magnificence of the works of God; and thereby to diſcover the excellency, the power, the wiſdom, and the goodneſs of that ſelf-exiſtent Being: Reaſon was given, to ſhew him his immediate dependence on his Creator for every bleſſing he enjoyed, as well as the capacity of enjoying them; and to fill his ſoul with gratitude for the overflowing bounty of his Maker: And Reaſon was given him, to complete and ſecure his felicity, by a ſettled confidence in the favour and protection of the Almighty, ſo long as he made uſe of it to controul and correct diſorderly appetites; and to anſwer the end of his creation, in admiring, reverencing, and adoring that

that ſource of perfection, mercy, and goodneſs. But, alas! to what miſerable purpoſes has wretched man employed this mighty boon of heaven! Reaſon, in place of reſtraining, has been made uſe of to encourage luſts and appetites, by inventing incentives to them: In place of leading men to ſee their duty, and the true object of their felicity, it has been employed in contriving means to divert the attention from looking at either: Nay, in place of diſcovering the boundleſs perfections of God, the abſolute dependence of man, and the neceſſary connexion between right and wrong and rewards and puniſhments, it has been fatally made uſe of to hide the Deity from the ſight of men, to erect man into an independent being, to aboliſh all hopes and fears of rewards or puniſhments, and to make felicity conſiſt in what is truly the diſhonour of the human nature.

AMAZING as this phænomenon is, nothing is more certainly true; nor has any effect in nature a more ſhameful, a more pitiful cauſe.

APPETITES were given to man, to prompt him to preſerve himſelf, and to continue the ſpecies. The natural calls to eat, to drink, to propagate the ſpecies, were neceſſary; elſe man, employed in contemplation, would ſoon have ceaſed to be. The acts of eating, drinking, copulating, without the natural ſtimulus, have nothing inviting in them. And it is an inſtance of the benignity of the Creator, that the gratification of thoſe neceſſary appetites is attended with a very ſenſible pleaſure, which rewards the obeying of nature's call; as it is an inſtance of his wiſdom, that, when the ends of theſe natural calls are anſwered, ſatiety enſues, and the objects coveted loſe their charm, and cannot be ſo much as thought of with any reliſh, until nature has farther occaſion for them.

THE deſire of knowledge, the effect of diſ-cerning and reaſoning, was implanted to prompt man to employ thoſe faculties by which the Deity and what is owing to him, might be diſcovered. And here again the goodneſs of the Divine Being is manifeſt, in annexing to the gratification of that deſire the calmeſt and moſt laſting ſatisfaction without that alloy which attends the gratification of the other, carnal, appetites; and with this ſingularity, that the deſire of knowledge is inſa-tiable, and, like its object, infinite; rewarding nevertheleſs the ſeeker after knowledge with very ſenſible pleaſure in every ſtep of his purſuit.

THE deſire of preſerving life (not to ſpeak of the natural impulſe to avoid ill) is the reſult of the pleaſures and enjoyments of both kinds pro-vided for man in this life.

AND the deſire of approbation is the incentive planted in man by his Maker, to diſpoſe him to do his duty; which is immediately rewarded by the calm ſatisfaction that warms his heart upon having done it. The approbation of the Author and Maker of all things muſt be of infinite con-ſequence to the creature; and the conſciouſneſs of having gained that approbation muſt yield the pureſt joy.

THE other diſpoſitions, or what are called paſ-ſions of the mind, ſuch as anger, fear, love, hat-tred, *&c.* have been placed in man for noble, and for ſalutary ends; not only as they reſpect man's duty to the Deity, but as they regard ſociety: though thoſe alſo, as man has unhappily contrived the matter, in place of promoting the ends for which they were meant, hurry man on to miſery and give birth to many diſorders in ſociety.

NOW, thus qualified for happineſs, what has man done to enjoy, or to preſerve it? Why, truly, find-ing an immediate pleaſure attendant upon the gra-tificatio

tification of ſenſual appetites, he is diſpoſed to place his happineſs in them: Finding that pains and induſtry muſt be uſed to ſupply what his appetites crave, he beſtows all his time and action in that purſuit: Finding that, employing his reaſon, he can refine upon the common gratification of thoſe appetites, by inventing new meats, new drinks, new ſauces; by procuring variety of women; by erecting palaces; by picture; by ſculpture; by muſick; and by numberleſs arts, to pleaſe and to amuſe; his reaſon is made uſe of to thoſe purpoſes only: And finding that, by the uſe of reaſon, he can not only arrive at thoſe things, but that, though he is far from being the ſtrongeſt of animals, he, by employing it, is more powerful than they are all put together; that he is their lord and maſter, and they ſubſervient to his uſes; that he can blow up rocks, alter the courſe of rivers, lock up the ſea in baſons, join, in a manner, diſtant continents by ſhips; that he can imitate thunder, and lay whole countries waſte; and that thoſe things he can do without any immediate controul or check from the Author of nature; he is apt to think he owes all theſe advantages and prerogatives to himſelf, and to that reaſon which diſtinguiſhes him from the reſt of the viſible creation; and, on that ſuppoſal, to conclude, that no return of duty or gratitude is due to that ſuperior Being, from whom his reaſon and all his real enjoyments flow.

As the firm belief of this concluſion is abſolutely neceſſary towards quieting his mind, in the career of brutal folly in which he is engaged, reaſon, that unfortunate tool, is made on every occaſion to blind its owner. It was given by the Creator to be his guide; and it ought to be ſo: if duly made uſe of and attended to, it would be ſo. But, as man has contrived to manage matters, it

is liſtened to only when it ſuggeſts what is fit to ſooth him in his fooliſh ſhameful courſes. On ſuch occaſions it is the ſole and ſovereign rule. But, if it preſumes to check him; if it inſinuates, that he is no more than a poor dependent creature, debtor to the ſupreme Being, and conſequently accountable for every talent, every bleſſing, every enjoyment; that ſuggeſtion is ſtraightway treated as the offspring, not of manly reaſon, but of mean daſtardly fear; a melancholy conceit, nurſed up in ſickly imaginations; which had its origin in certain inventions of cunning lawgivers, who, to keep their people in order, and in obedience to the laws eſtabliſhed by them, publiſhed notions of right and wrong, and of rewards and puniſhments, which, conveyed down by tradition, have gained credit with the weak, to the great diſturbance of their quiet, and paſs for realities with enthuſiaſts. Unhappy man! Fatal effect of prejudice: Reaſon, the ſovereign rule, is to be followed, and allowed that name, or rejected, and called the fruit of melancholy or enthuſiaſm, as it does, or does not, conform itſelf to prejudices.

But what is the moſt amazing on this article is, that, in proportion as men are, or imagine they are poſſeſſed of knowledge, and of the art of reaſoning, in an eminent degree, their abuſe of that knowledge, and of the reaſoning faculty, to the prejudice of the end to which it was chiefly meant, is the more conſpicuous. In antient times, which are now called times of ignorance, when men did not pique themſelves on the deep knowledge, and the profound ſkill in reaſoning, which we boaſt of at this time, there was a general diſpoſition to reverence the Creator, and a profeſſed infidel was hardly to be met with. But, in theſe our days of ſuppoſed knowledge, the guiſe is ſadly changed.

changed. Except amongſt thoſe called ignorant, not many are to be found that do, or pretend to believe in God.

FROM the beginning, a rational being, unaided by learning, and the experience of former ages, could eaſily diſcern the hand of an intelligent, wiſe, powerful, and very bountiful Creator, in the whole and every part of the fabrick of this ſyſtem that fell under his ken; and could as eaſily diſcover his obligations to, and his dependence on that Being. And accordingly we ſee, by the earlieſt accounts of time that has come to our hands, all mankind, full of a perſuaſion of their dependence, full of reverence to the Deity, ſoliciting his favour and protection by prayer, by ceremonies, by ſacrifices, ſometimes human, nay of their firſt-born; and imputing all the favourable or croſs incidents, that happened, to them, to the good-will or diſpleaſure of the ſovereign Being, whom it was their chief ſtudy to placate.

IT is true, that the notions they generally entertained of the Deity were imperfect, as well as their manner of ſerving him corrupted; circumſtances that can eaſily be accounted for from the weakneſs and perverſeneſs, of thoſe who took the lead in directing their religious opinions and practices. But ſtill it is undeniably true, that the groſs of mankind were ſerious in their belief of the exiſtence of a Deity, of their dependence on him, and of the occaſion they had for his protection and favour.

To this general diſpoſition of mankind it was in part owing, that the goſpel, upon its firſt publication, made ſo rapid and ſo ſurpriſing progreſs. No man at that time doubted of the exiſtence of a Deity, or of man's dependence on him. It was eaſy to ſatisfy every one who admitted theſe propoſitions, that mankind, by the corruption into

which they had fallen, ſtood mightily in need of ſome interceſſor, ſome mean by which they might be ſaved from the weight of their ſins. And it is no marvel, that evidence given to men ſo convinced, that ſalvation might be had through JESUS, ſhould be received with gladneſs.

AND accordingly we ſee, that in a trifle of time, the herd of mankind, in defiance of all diſcouragements, and of the moſt ſevere perſecutions, from power, greedily embraced and profeſſed this faith; continued ſtedfaſtly in profeſſion of it, notwithſtanding the monſtrous abſurdities with which the teachers of that faith loaded it, and the more monſtrous and ſhocking lives and manners of the teachers; until of late years, that what ought to have been improved into a bleſſing to mankind, has unfortunately turned out to their deſtruction.

IN the period juſt mentioned, wicked and voluptuous courſes; and many groſs villanies and abuſes were daily committed by profligate men, which the degenerate condition of mankind produced. But ſtill theſe wickedneſſes were diſguiſed, diſowned, or ſome how ſought to be atoned for. The villain diſſembled at leaſt, and was forced to be ſo mean as to become a hypocrite. No man dreamed of profeſſing openly, that he denied the being of a God, or his dependence on, and being accountable to him. And, if any one was indeed ſo fooliſh, as well as impious, as to entertain ſuch a notion, (which by the by is with me a queſtion), there was no temptation for uttering it; becauſe there was no chance that any one ſhould concur in ſupporting ſuch an opinion.

BUT of late the caſe is ſurpriſingly, and ſadly altered, by the very mean that ought to have produced the contrary effect; increaſe in knowledge, from the more careful obſervation of nature, and from

from the peruſal of the works of the learned in all ages.

WHATEVER degree of acquiſition of knowledge from experience the longevity of the antediluvians might have rendered practicable for any particular perſon, it is certain, that the ſhort period to which mens lives are now, and have for ſome thouſands of years been limited, does not permit any individual to lay in any conſiderable ſtock of knowledge. And, if he will know much, he muſt profit of others, his contemporaries, or of thoſe that went before him, by tradition, or by writing.

HENCE all arts have been perfected by degrees. The experience of one age adds to that of another. And if the diſcoveries of our forefathers had not been handed down to us by writing or tradition, we ſhould be as rude and unlearned as the moſt barbarous of them were.

AFTER writing became faſhionable among the antients, the experience, the reaſoning, and diſcoveries of one age, were tranſmitted to, and improved on by the next. The inquiſitive became diligent in peruſing the diſcoveries of former times: philoſophy became mightily in vogue; and it was no uncommon thing for men of parts, to dedicate their whole time to the contemplation of nature, and to place their whole felicity in employing all their mental faculties in the inveſtigation of truth.

As purſuits of this kind are of all others the moſt noble, and the moſt ſuited to a rational being, they ſoon became the moſt honourable. Philoſophers were held to be *wiſe men*, and were called ſo *tout court*; as undoubtedly they held themſelves to be, though modeſtly they contented themſelves with the appellation of *lovers of wiſdom* only; and the vanity they had in being very much

more knowing than other people, and in being thought by others *wise*, was the chief reward they had for their labour, and contributed not a little to run them into the vain opinion, that they were in very deed *wise*, and that their skill and wisdom could answer all purposes.

In all arts and sciences, so far as the observations they were possessed of afforded materials, they reasoned accurately. In morality, and the whole system of duties which men owe reciprocally to each other, and which members owe to the society whereof they are part, they acquitted themselves well. Brutal appetites and enjoyments they saw, and reproached the meanness of; the superior happiness which the right exercise of the understanding yields, they felt and recommended. Reason, in contradistinction to appetites and passions, was their sovereign guide; and felicity was to be attained by following its dictates. Social and publick virtues had, according to their notions, charms sufficient to make the possessor of them happy, and to secure against all wants, pains, and distresses.

But, though their sagacity and attention discovered and described the beauty of virtue; though they defined with precision the limits of social and political duty; and though it was the labour of their lives, to recommend what was good, and to dissuade from what was evil; yet it unluckily so happened, that the learning and reason which they valued themselves upon never once led them to the reflexions for which they were principally intended, on the excellencies and manifest attributes of the Author of the creation, on the necessary dependence of man upon his favour, and on the duty thence resulting to the Deity. Such reflexions would have been fit to humble their vanity, and to have checked them in the course of pursuits, which, though

though not openly vitious, yet had nothing of that reverence and attention that is due to the Deity mixed with them.

So ſoon as theſe wiſe philoſophers had got that quantity of knowledge which in their apprehenſions placed them above other men, and had got into a high opinion of their own reaſon; they no longer employed their parts in attending to and inveſtigating the wondrous effects of wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, diſplayed in the fabrick of this univerſe, in order to raiſe high and honourable ideas of the Almighty, and becoming notions of man's meanneſs, ſhort-ſightedneſs, and dependence; but, rejecting ſuch poor-ſpirited reflexions, they took it in their heads to imagine, that the profuſion of wonders in the works of creation was intended only for an exerciſe to their underſtanding, to diſcover how, by what mechaniſm, and for what ends ſuch things were brought about. They found out they had not power ſufficient to produce them; but on the all-ſufficiency of their reaſon they depended; and therefore to work they went, to diſcover, and to explain nature. Hence ſo many *coſmogonia*'s, ſo many ſyſtems for ſhewing how the various *phænomena* are performed. Some ſet out on *hypotheſes* which time has diſcovered to be abſolutely falſe. Some gave only words, which had no certain meaning, and therefore explained nothing; but which the philoſopher and his followers were perfectly ſatisfied with. And all of them agreed in this, that their reaſon was a match for the undertaking; that is, fit to inveſtigate and deſcribe all the myſteries of nature, and to diſcover and determine all the ways and works of God.

With this prepoſſeſſion in behalf of the powers of their reaſon, theſe wiſe Gentlemen undertook to inquire into the nature of God; laying it

down as a fixed point, to admit no quality in that Being that their reaſon did not aſſign him; nor to allow any action to him, but what they, making uſe of their reaſon and obſervation, could aſſign the cauſe and end of.

On theſe articles the difference of opinion was great. Some held the world to be eternal; and the infinite variety and contrivance, to be the effect of *Nature*, eternal alſo: and with this ſound, in place of ſenſe, they were ſatisfied. Some held the world to be the work of an intelligent Being: but the number of them was few; and what regard he had to men in the compoſition, they did not ſay. Some held that the Deity directed events in this world, particularly thoſe that regarded nations and ſocieties: others utterly denied Providence; and imagined, that every thing was left to the government of Chance. Few philoſophers allowed of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments: thoſe that did, thought only of rewarding publick virtues, and puniſhing vices noxious to ſociety. None of them imagined that God ever minded the inward diſpoſition, or heart of man.

As *Epicurus* and his followers obſerved, that no ſignal puniſhment attended vice in this world they denied Providence; as they could not be ſatisfied that the dead could riſe, they denied a future ſtate; and, as there was no puniſhment that actually attended vitious actions in this world or another, all actions with them were indifferent. So that this ſect, which was numerous, diſcarded the Deity, and made brutes of men.

But it is impoſſible they could have dropt into ſuch monſtrous abſurdities, if the vain voluptuous courſe, in which they were engaged, had not given a bias to their reaſon; and if they had not made reaſon ſo much the teſt and touchſtone

all things, as to reject every thing which it could frame any objection to, if it could not alſo, by its own light, diſſolve that objection.

HAD they duly attended to the popular opinions which prevailed in their days, that the gods regarded the actions of men; that good actions were pleaſing, and evil diſpleaſing to the Deity; that ſins, unleſs expiated, were to be puniſhed; and that rewards and puniſhments were to be met with in another ſtate: had they with care conſidered the eſſential difference between good and evil actions; the monſtrous abſurdity which attends the ſuppoſal, that wickedneſs can go unpuniſhed, or virtue unrewarded; and the neceſſary conſequence from thence, that there muſt be another time for thoſe rewards and puniſhments, as they do not happen in this life: and had they permitted themſelves to ſee, without prejudice, the numberleſs obligations, unacknowledged and unreturned, under which man lies to his Creator and Preſerver, and the infinite diſproportion there is between our weak ſcanty reaſon and his boundleſs wiſdom; it is impoſſible they could have fallen into a ſet of ſuch childiſh opinions as they maintained.

BUT they were too much bewitched with the chimerical notions they had of their own excellency; too fond of the character they had carved out for themſelves, after driving the Deity from their thoughts, of being lords of the creation, the chief of beings, accountable to none, happy in themſelves, intitled to gratify every appetite, and ſubject to no law but that of their own good-will and pleaſure, to ſubmit to the mortification that muſt reſult from the diſcovery of their real ſtate. The miſery into which folly had plunged human nature, muſt be a diſagreeable object of contemplation to a vain man who had got himſelf into poſſeſſion

poſſeſſion of the ſeat of God. The neceſſity of humiliation, repentance, amendment, interceſſion, and of a total alteration of views and purſuits, was a pill of no eaſy digeſtion. And therefore it is no great wonder, that, though, on the firſt publication of the goſpel, the good tidings were greedily received by the unlearned, and conſequently leſs prejudiced, the philoſophers, and their ſcholars, the pretended learned men of the world, reſiſted it with the greateſt warmth and bitterneſs.

It was however lucky, that, though the infidelity of the antient philoſophers was almoſt as ſtrong as that of the modern, it was by much leſs extenſive; and therefore leſs miſchievous. Learning in thoſe days was confined to a few heads; books were ſcarce, and the purchaſe of them coſt a great deal of money: every body did not meddle with philoſophiſing, as they do at preſent; and, of conſequence, knowledge of the philoſophical kind was only to be met with amongſt philoſophers who taught, and ſuch of the hearers as had leiſure, genius, and books, to enable them to proſecute their ſtudies. The herd of the people remained ignorant and undebauched; and the Chriſtian doctrine, which took root amongſt them, when it called in unprejudiced reaſon, and learning, to aſſiſt it, proved at laſt too ſtrong for the few fantaſtick proud philoſophers.

Thus was infidelity, that is, in theory and opinion, baniſhed from the Chriſtian world, till of late, that a falſe opinion has prevailed, that, with the reſtoration of learning, the knowledge of mankind has enlarged itſelf infinitely; that this is the effect of genius and reaſon; and that, making a proper uſe of this reaſon, every thing that is, or appears to be myſterious in nature, may to a certainty, at leaſt to a very high degree of probability,

lity, be diſcovered. And this falſe opinion has unfortunately become ſo prevalent and extenſive, that, except amongſt the meaner and the leſs conceited part of mankind, it is not eaſy to meet with any one that is not tainted with it.

THIS miſchief is however by no means to be charged upon learning, but on the weakneſs and prejudices of mankind; who, conceiving too high an opinion of the powers of their own underſtanding, preſume to meaſure every thing, divine as well as human, by it. For, when firſt the ſubverſion of the *Greek* empire drove learned men, with their books, into the Weſt, which fell in with the time of the invention of printing, whereby knowledge was circulated, and could be come at much cheaper, and with leſs labour, than formerly, great numbers of men of genius applied themſelves to ſtudy, and in a trifle of time acquired ſo much knowledge, as diſpoſed them to throw off the yoke, as well as the abſurdities of the church of *Rome*; which would have had a thorough effect, but for the paſſions and intereſts of ſelfiſh princes. But, in this attack on the reigning church, infidelity had no ſort of hand. Learning had warmed the Piety, as well as it improved the knowledge of the reformers: a thorough examination of the Scriptures, of hiſtory, and of antiquity, independent of the tradition of the church, ſecured and defined their faith: and piety in thoſe days was the companion of knowledge and learning; as it muſt ever continue to be, where knowledge and learning are lodged in ſober minds.

THE quick and eaſy conveyance of knowledge by the preſs ſoon produced in all ſoils ſwarms of men of real or pretended learning. Curioſity, genius, or the faſhion, (for it was the mode then to ſtudy), filled *Europe* with men of letters. Sciences

ences of all ſorts were purſued by people of all countries, as their taſtes ſeverally led them; all their antient learning was expoſed to view; in theology, the progreſs juſt deſcribed was made; the *Roman* law was ſtudied, and taught with great accuracy; the *Greek* and *Roman* oratory and poetry became the ſtandards of performances of that kind; the *Greek*, particularly *Ariſtotle*'s philoſophy, reigned in the ſchools; *Hippocrates*, *Galen*, *Celſus*, *&c.* gave lights to phyſicians which they had not before; and the works of the ancient aſtronomers and mathematicians which remain, revived thoſe ſtudies; in which, by the aſſiduous application of ingenious men, very great progreſs has been made.

It muſt be owned, that, in almoſt every branch of learning, knowledge has been carried to a higher pitch, ſince the revival of learning, than it appears to have been by the antients, from the remains of their works that have come to our hands. But that is not to be aſcribed to the ſuperiority of genius of the moderns; ſince the true cauſe of it can eaſily be aſſigned, *i. e.* That multitudes are at work on the ſame ſubject; and that the preſs affords ſo quick a conveyance of their conceptions and obſervations to each other, that they are thereby vaſtly aided in their lucubrations. Beſides that many accidental diſcoveries, by men not always of the brighteſt parts, have given hints, and ſtruck out lights to the ingenious, which have led to conſiderable improvements, and have baniſhed many falſe ſyſtems.

Accident gave birth to the invention of teleſcopes, and of microſcopes; and yet to the firſt is owing the confirmation of the *Copernican*, and the ruin of the *Ptolemean* ſyſtem; and to the ſecond, the confirmation of Dr. *Hervey*'s diſcovery of the circulation of the blood, as well as the produc-

tion

tion to view of numberleſs tribes of animals, hitherto hid from mortal ſight. Accident gave birth to the invention of gun-powder, and of the air-pump; and experiments made on theſe have diſcloſed many unknown properties of the air. Experiments, to which men have been led by accidents, have made ſurpriſing diſcoveries in chymiſtry, and many parts of natural philoſophy, to the great improvement of phyſick, and other branches of uſeful knowledge. And the accidental diſcovery of the *Weſt-Indies*, and the intercourſe by trade with it, and with the *Eaſt-Indies*, have brought numbers of particulars to light, to which the antients were utter ſtrangers.

POSSESED of the learning of the antients, with the vaſt addition of later diſcoveries, it is not to be wondered at, if the moderns exceeded the antients as much in vanity, and the good opinion they entertained of their own capacity, as they did in knowledge. Hence they employed, with great induſtry, their time and their talents in ſearches after the ſecrets of nature, and in diſcovering and aſſigning the phyſical cauſes of the effects that ſhine forth in the univerſe. *Deſcartes*'s new *Coſmogonia* beat *Ariſtotle*'s, and all the other antient ſyſtems, out of the ſchools. The artifice employed by the Creator, in the formation of the univerſe, in the direction, and the preſervation of it, was deſcribed, and laid open to the comprehenſion of the meaneſt capacity; the phyſical cauſes of the ebbing and flowing of the ſea, of magnetiſm, of the formation of metals, and of all the other ſeeming myſteries of nature, were aſſigned; and, to the conviction of the inventers, and of almoſt all *Europe*, for about half a century, nothing was wanted but the application of the principles, to account for every *phænomenon*, how ſurpriſing ſoever, that ſhould at any time make its appearance.

WHILST

WHILST the world was drunk with this conceit, no marvel they ſhould entertain a very high opinion of the ſagacity of man. If his power was not to be compared with that of the Omnipotent, yet his wiſdom and knowledge did not ſeem to fall far ſhort of that of the Omniſcient. A well-inſtructed and well convinced *Carteſian* would not think himſelf hard put to it by the queſtions about the formation of natural things which the Almighty put to *Job*, to humble his pride, and to convince him, that he was not a competent judge of the ways and views of God. And thence it naturally followed, that they looked down, with ſome contempt, upon ſuch parts of the Scripture as appeared to them unphiloſophical, entertained a poor opinion of the writers of them, and laughed at the ſimplicity of ſerious Chriſtians, who believed ſeveral articles, in matters of religion, which thoſe wiſe men could not account for ſo well, as they could for the formation of the univerſe, and the various *phænomena* of nature.

To this way of thinking their maſter's firſt principle led them. *Quicquid clarè & diſtinctè percipio, eſt verum*, was the foundation on which he built, and a good one. He ſurely run no riſk in admitting whatever was founded on it. In all the parts of mathematicks, in which he excelled, the converting the propoſition, and admitting nothing to be true but what one clearly perceives to be ſo, is the rule which has guided ſuch as followed it to that degree of certainty which has diſtinguiſhed thoſe ſciences from all others. The object of them admits of the application of the rule. Lines, angles, numbers, the creatures of man's imagination, defined by him, and receiving their nature from that definition, he may clearly conceive all the properties of; and is in the right to deny to any line, angle, or number, what he does

does not clearly perceive to belong to it. But, if he carries this rule to other ſciences, where the diſcovery of truth depends upon a different ſpecies of evidence: if he applies it to the works or ways of the Moſt High, which his knowledge does not reach to, as it does to the properties of lines and numbers, beings of his own creation; and of which he cannot poſſibly know any thing but what he gathers from conjecture, founded on the appearances in nature, or from what the Deity may have been pleaſed to reveal; monſtrous miſtakes may, and muſt grow. A thouſand improbable, nay almoſt inconceivable things, in natural philoſophy, are true. The teſtimony of the ſenſes confutes all objections from improbability, or inconceivability, if one may uſe the expreſſion; and credible evidence ſhort of that of ſeeing or feeling, from unſuſpected witneſſes, creates that certainty on which men may ſafely depend and act. And, if it has pleaſed the Almighty to diſcover to mankind any thing relating to himſelf or to his ways, it is but of little conſequence, whether that falls in with the philoſophers notions or conceptions; and the only ſenſible queſtion can be, Whether there is ſufficient evidence that in fact ſuch things were revealed?

NOTWITHSTANDING theſe obvious reflexions, Monſ. *Deſcartes* and his followers, and the other ſects of philoſophers who have ſucceeded him, not content with world-making, have proceeded to god-making. They have preſumed to define him, his attributes, and powers; nay, they have determined what he is and muſt be, and what he is not and cannot be, with ſuch preciſion and certainty, that, if any thing, ſaid to be revealed by himſelf, does not conform directly to the character and qualities they have given this god, they ſtraightway

ſtraightway conteſt, and, right or wrong, reject the evidence for ſuch revelation.

DESCARTES's romance kept entire poſſeſſion of men's belief for full fifty years. If ſome croſs experiment ſhocked it in ſome particular, the ſyſtem was pieced up and mended by his followers, and accommodated to the new-diſcovered *phænomena*; till at laſt the tide of contrary obſervations and experiments was too ſtrong to be reſiſted. All the invention of his countrymen the *French*, could not prop the theory that experiment demonſtrated to be falſe: and what was worſt of all for *France*, it was cruſhed under the weight of another theory, built on the diſcoveries of Sir *Iſaac Newton*, an *Engliſhman*.

THE ſagacity of Sir *Iſaac* was admired by all, and adored by his countrymen. His genius puſhed him to diſcoveries in the moſt abſtruſe parts of the mathematicks, that have cauſed the aſtoniſhment of the learned; and at the ſame time, from accurate obſervations made on nature, he has given hints, which, though by him flung out in the form of queries only, his countrymen have converted into ſo many certain propoſitions; and upon them have founded what they pretended to be a complete theory or ſyſtem, which future experiments and diſcovery muſt try the ſolidity of. But it muſt be owned Sir *Iſaac*'s modeſty was much greater than that of his followers, not only in the title he gave to his notions, but in the reſpect with which, notwithſtanding his vaſt genius and ſuperior knowledge, he treated the Deity and the Scriptures.

IT is truly amazing, that the ſeries of blunders which the moſt exalted geniuſes who applied themſelves to ſyſtem-making have by late diſcoveries been found to have dropt into, one after another, has not cured the philoſophers of our time of the high

high conceit they have entertained of the compaſs and all-ſufficiency of the human underſtanding, and of the madneſs of the undertaking, to trace, with the organs which we have got, the hidden wonders of the material creation; eſpecially ſince the more light we gain into natural things by accidental diſcoveries, the thicker the difficulties pour themſelves on us, and the more inexplicable theſe myſteries appear to be.

About the beginning of the laſt century, natural philoſophers had nothing to exerciſe their talents on, but ſuch *phænomena* as fell within their ſenſes, unaided by inſtruments, and ſuch obſervations as were without very great care or accuracy made accidentally on ſuch things as gave ſurpriſe on account of their ſingularity. But, ſince that time, the microſcope has unveiled a ſort of new creation, at leaſt a very remarkable part of it, till then unknown; the teleſcope has diſcovered new worlds in the ſkies; and improvements in mathematicks and aſtronomy have ſhewed the ſize and diſtance of thoſe worlds. The inconceivable minuteneſs of the microſcopick animals, of the parts whereof they are compoſed, of their juices and nutriment, and the delicacy of the artifice that has produced and ſupports them, ſtrikes the mind with as ſtrong a ſenſe of the plenitude of ſkill and power of the Creator, as the grandeur and magnificence of the new diſcoveries in the ſkies does of his immenſity; and both are equally fit to give to man the moſt humbling view of his own knowledge and penetration, as well as of his power, when compared with thoſe of the Almighty.

The air-pump, experiments made therein, and others to which theſe gave riſe, have diſcovered many properties of the air, heretofore unknown, which ſhew the admirable ſagacity of that Being,

Being, by whoſe aſtoniſhing contrivance that fluid is ſo adjuſted and tempered, as in effect to ſupport the animal as well as the vegetable world, and to maintain this part of the creation in the condition in which it is.

CHYMISTRY, purſued with attention, has diſcovered many effects of fire, and of mixtures, and general properties in metals, minerals, and other bodies, that give daily ſurpriſe; Anatomy has to a certain pitch laid open the aſtoniſhing artifice of the Creator, in the texture of the body of man, as well as of other animals; a priſm in Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s hand has diſcloſed many qualities in light, which never had entered into the heart of man to think of; and ſome accidental experiments in Electricity have preſented to the ſenſes appearances which ſhew that there are ſome powers and properties in matter not hitherto dreamed of, and which no theory as yet hatched can account for.

THE natural effect of thoſe diſcoveries upon minds rightly diſpoſed ought to be, to mortify ſelf-conceit, and to exalt our idea of the infinite power and perfection of the Creator; ſince, the greater progreſs we make in diſcovering, the more wonders of contrivance, wiſdom, power, and goodneſs we meet with, which though our reaſon can ſometimes ſee the end of, it is too ſcanty to trace the mechanical cauſe of; and for that muſt reſort to the will and pleaſure of the Deity, unleſs we will be ſo abſurd as to ſay, that nature, without any meaning or contrivance, has beſtowed thoſe properties and powers upon certain parcels of matter.

THAT denſe bodes gravitate in proportion to their maſs, and that projected bodies continue in motion until obſtructed, are appearances ſo common, that no one is ſurpriſed with the obſervation; and the crowd do not trouble their head in inquiring

inquiring after the cauſes. But it is not ſo with the clear-ſighted philoſophers. They muſt puzzle their brains with aſſigning the mechanical cauſes for thoſe effects; and, when they have done their beſt, they muſt confeſs their ignorance, or riſk error, by averring that there is no mechanical cauſe; and that the effect depends on a law of nature, which thoſe who are diſpoſed to be civil to the Deity ſay, flows from the mere will of the Deity.

In the ſame way, every man living is ſenſible of the intimate connexion between the ſoul and the body; he feels the ſenſation raiſed in the one by the action of the other, and knows the ready obedience which ſuch parts of the body as are intended for action yield to the will of the ſoul: but how the one acts upon the other, is not only not known, but, one may venture to ſay, not knowable or conceivable by us, until we acquire ſome degree of knowledge of what we are at preſent mere ſtrangers to, the nature of *Soul*, and the nature of *Body*.

A body fit to reflect light and colours, when placed in light, not only returns the rays of light that fall upon it, to the luminous body that enlightened it, but ſends the picture of itſelf quite round the hemiſphere in all directions, and to every point: placing a thouſand, a million of ſuch bodies near one another, each performs the ſame operation; the rays of light and colours come inſtantaneouſly to the ſpectator's eye from each, without being diſturbed or diverted in the paſſage by the numberleſs rays returned, in different and contrary directions, by the other contiguous bodies. That the Being who contrived this mechaniſm, and created the machine, can explain it, and can give us capacity to comprehend it, is not to be doubted: but until it ſhall be his good pleaſure

pleaſure to do ſo, all we have to do is, to admire his power and ſkill, and thankfully to acknowledge the bleſſing he has beſtowed upon us by this aſtoniſhing machinery.

WHY then, what has man got by the numerous experiments and diſcoveries of later years? Why, ſurely, a more accurate and certain knowledge of many *phænomena* of nature, of many of the works of God, than the antients had, and a more diſtinct view of the ends and uſes of many pieces and parts of the creation than men were formerly poſſeſſed of: diſcoveries fit to raiſe the moſt high and honourable notions of the Creator, and of his goodneſs to his creatures; and to convince man of his ſhort-ſightedneſs, dependence, and duty.

BUT has man made this improvement of thoſe diſcoveries? Nothing leſs! He makes a pompous muſter to his own vain mind of his knowledge; he looks upon it as his property, acquired by his own ingenuity and induſtry; he prides himſelf on his ſagacity, and hopes by its aſſiſtance to be ſtill richer in wiſdom; and he feels ſo much pleaſure in the purſuit of more knowledge, and takes ſo much joy upon every trifling diſcovery which adds to his ſtore, that he cannot think with patience on the evidence which his increaſe in knowledge gives of his real ignorance and weakneſs, nor on the infinite perfection and goodneſs of the Deity, which that knowledge demonſtrates. Such reflexions would ſhock his vanity; would convince him he had paſſed his life unprofitably; and might determine him to quit his beloved courſe of philoſophizing, or other courſes ſtill more fooliſh: or elſe to perſiſt in them, under a load of anxious doubts which might pall the taſte of his enjoyments.

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He muſt be a ſtranger to the exerciſe of the rational faculty, who does not know, that the purſuit of *knowledge* in any ſcience is attended with very ſenſible pleaſure; or who doubts, that a philoſopher, if bleſſed with health, and means, and temperance, may reaſonably propoſe to drive on in the career of life, till nature decay, with as much ſatisfaction as any man who does not confidently look for a happy *hereafter*. And, as this is the caſe, ſuppoſing a philoſopher engaged in this pleaſurable courſe, it is not to be imagined, that he would quit it willingly, or liſten, without ſome reluctance, to doctrines that ſhould make him uneaſy in it. With ſuch prejudice does almoſt every philoſopher of our days attend to what he daily hears preached, and what the voice of all nature proclaims, of the duties which men owe to their Creator, of the regard which he expects from them to his will, and of the certainty of rewards and puniſhments; and is therefore fertile in objections, to prevent his own and other people's believing theſe truths.

And what puts our age in a much more lamentable caſe than thoſe that were before it is, that, whereas the number of philoſophers formerly was but very ſmall, the number of pretended philoſophers is now immenſely great; and, whereas books and learning were then in a few hands, at preſent almoſt every body can read. The preſs circulates books very cheap; philoſophers from opinion, and wits for bread, publiſh Atheiſm; and the half-learned and vitious read. With theſe the authority of the learned, as well as the objections againſt doctrines which men's vices may induce them to wiſh not to be true, go far; and thoſe of inferior learning or rank are glad to follow the opinions, as well as the vices, of their betters: ſo that a man that truly fears God, is at this

this day almoſt as great a curioſity as an Atheiſt heretofore.

WHAT makes the truth of thoſe reflexions the more ſenſible, is, that, though thoſe philoſphers called *Freethinkers* controvert the duties owing to the Deity, and dream of no puniſhment attendant on the neglect; yet they all pretend to be, and generally are ſenſible of the ſocial duties, and act up to them better than others do who in other reſpects think more juſtly than they. And this comes from the moral ſenſe in them; which they rather encourage than ſtifle on that article, from the vanity of having the good opinion and approbation of mankind, which they court; and from this conſideration, that it is no obſtruction to their purſuits. Whereas, brought up with doubts of the very exiſtence of the Deity; ripening into years, under a total neglect of all duties that may be owing to him; immerged in purſuits and courſes, whereof the objects are pretty much incompatible with thoſe duties; and conſcious, that ſuch duties neglected, if there is any real obligation to them, muſt be highly offenſive to the Deity, and attended with certain puniſhment; it is natural for them to wiſh they have made no miſtake in that article, and that they may not be found debtors to the divine juſtice. And it imports them very much, in reſpect to the future quiet and tranquillity of their lives, if they reſolve to purſue the pleaſures wherein they are engaged, to convince themſelves, if they can, that all apprehenſions of danger from neglect of duties to the Deity are but vain terrors the device of prieſts, or the dreams of melancholy men.

BUT, if there be ſuch a thing as an intelligent Being, that has employed and diſplayed infinite wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, in the creation of this univerſe; that has with ſtupendous artifice

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ſtored this globe with every thing neceſſary, not only for the ſupport, but for the felicity of man; that on all his works has ſtamped characters of the infinite perfections and overflowing goodneſs of the Author; that has given to man, and to him alone of all the viſible creation, that ſhare of his goodneſs, eyes to be entertained with the magnificence, the beauty, the harmony, and the order of the univerſe; to ſee the perfection of the Creator in his works; and to diſcover the infinite obligations he lies under to, and the dependence he has on the goodneſs of his beneficent Maker; that has ſo moulded his heart and ſpirit, as to make pleaſure attendant on admiration, and love and gratitude the neceſſary companions of the ſenſe of favours received; and that has joined to the idea of ingratitude the ſenſation of horror; and to conſciouſneſs of gratitude, an inward ſatisfaction, that even adds to the reliſh of the favour received: what could be the view of the Creator in beſtowing thoſe eyes, and that diſpoſition of heart and ſpirit? Was he, or was he not to be diſcovered, admired, adored, loved, and reverenced; or was it indifferent to that perfect and beneficent Being, which way his creature employed his eyes, or diſpoſed of his heart? And, on the other hand, how groſs muſt be the folly and guilt of man, who, miſemploying his eyes, and miſapplying his heart, has refuſed to ſee the perfection of God in his works; and, in place of acknowledging with gratitude his obligation and dependence, chuſes to be indebted to nothing but what he calls *Nature* and *Chance*, ſubſtituted by him in the room of God; and beſtows his heart upon vanity, upon the creature in place of the Creator?

If neglects and breaches of the ſocial and moral duties are criminal even in the eyes of Freethinkers, what muſt be the guilt of neglecting the

only duty, properly ſpeaking, to God, of denying him the only return which he expects, becauſe it is the only return he has qualified us to make, reverence, love, and gratitude? Ingratitude to men is marked with the blackeſt ſtain; what muſt then that vice be when it has for its object the ſource of all goodneſs? and what chance is there that it ſhall paſs unpuniſhed? It is aſtoniſhing, that men who juſtly look with ſuch horror and deteſtation on murder and parricide, ſhould think ſo cooly on the abnegation of the Deity; which denying him his tribute of reverence and gratitude is. But the inſtances of puniſhment which the magiſtrate, for the preſervation of the ſociety, inflicts, help to keep up the idea of horror that attends the firſt; and the forbearance of vengeance in the latter is by weak pretenders to reaſon made an argument to conclude, that no offence is given.

It is a ſtrange imagination, to admit, that men are formed with ideas of right and wrong, with a ſenſe of duty and the contrary, and with full phyſical liberty to act as they ſhall beſt like; and yet to maintain, that it is abſolutely indifferent to the Deity, who gave them that rule of conduct, whether they conform to or tranſgreſs it, whether they do right or wrong; and, conſequently, that it is indifferent to them, if they eſcape puniſhment from their fellow-creatures, whether they have or have not conformed themſelves to the rule of their Creator and Sovereign Lord.

The excellency of the body, the capacity of the underſtanding, the extent of the knowledge of the moſt perfect of the human ſpecies, cannot poſſibly make any impreſſion on the Deity, other than the general complacency that reſults from the ſurvey of his works, and ſeeing that they are good. What a poor figure muſt the parts, the ſagacity and the knowledge of the admired Sir *Iſaac Newton*

Newton make in the eye of the Omniſcient? And how few *Newtons* can mankind boaſt of? Theſe are therefore not the qualities that claim the Deity's regard. But, if a rational creature, however limited in underſtanding, or imperfect in body, ſhall have his heart and ſpirit right diſpoſed; ſhall ſee, and, in all his thoughts and actions, acknowledge his dependence on the God that made him; ſhall maintain in his heart a grateful ſenſe of the numberleſs obligations he lies under to that bountiful Being, and ſhall be thoroughly diſpoſed to make the *Will* of that Being the rule of his actions, during the whole courſe of his life; regardleſs of the pleaſures and ſenſual enjoyment which following this rule may deprive him of, and of the dangers and inconveniencies to which purſuing it may expoſe him; in full confidence, that the ſincerity of his heart will be acceptable to, and rewarded by the Creator, who endued it with ſuch diſpoſitions: we muſt neceſſarily conclude, either that the Omniſcient does not know the diſpoſitions and inward actings of the ſpirits of all his creatures, or that the grateful and dutiful heart of ſuch a creature is pleaſing and agreeable to him.

THUS the objects of the complacence of the Almighty amongſt the children of men may be as numerous as the individuals of the ſpecies. He has given to very few thoſe diſtinguiſhing parts that provoke the eſteem even of their fellow-creatures; but he has given to all hearts ſuſceptible of reverence, gratitude, and love; and they have no more to do, but to employ thoſe diſpoſitions towards the proper object, to entitle themſelves to the continuation of his goodneſs and good-will for them. It is remarkable, that the only thing which God claims of man in ſcripture is the *heart*; and, it is remarkable alſo, that poſſeſſion of the heart of any of our own, or even of the brute ſpecies,

is what ſecures our affection in return. Perſuaſion of the friendſhip or love of any of our fellow-creatures determines us to ſentiments of the like kind for them; and we cannot help, when a dog, a cat, or any other familiar creature ſhews marks of any particular reſpect or fondneſs for us, to have pleaſure in that fondneſs, and to cheriſh the creature in return. Now, though to limit the ſovereign and ſelf-exiſtent Mind, by ſuppoſing that it has juſt ſuch qualities and modifications as ours, would be raſh: yet it would be raſh alſo to aſſert, that there are not in it qualities and diſpoſitions ſimilar to ſuch as are praiſe-worthy and commendable in our own. Nay, the contrary muſt be admitted by all who believe the ſcriptures; which aſſure, that God made man after his own image, and in every page declare his diſlike of ſin, and regard for piety.

But here lies the misfortune: This claim of the Creator to the hearts of his creatures cannot be complied with; becauſe they have already diſpoſed of their hearts in another way. Luſts and follies of very different kinds have got poſſeſſion of their ſpirits, and the gratification of thoſe is the object of their purſuit. Multitudes follow the direction of the temperature of their body, and are ſlaves to the appetites that prevail in them; which chain them to the oar they tug at, by the immediate pleaſure they taſte in obeying the call of thoſe appetites; whilſt the very enjoyment of what they are ſo fond of, deſtroys the appetite, pulls on diſeaſes and peeviſhneſs, with early old-age and decay; which muſt be attended with remorſe and horror, if they do not carefully lock out from their thoughts all ideas of futurity, and of what ought to have been the object of their purſuits. To talk to ſuch men of duty, whether in the career of their enjoyments, or when they

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are no longer capable of enjoying what their ſoul took delight in, is to preach to the deaf, at leaſt to ſuch as will undoubtedly ſtop their ears againſt ſounds that muſt be ſo grating and diſagreeable.

AND, on the other hand, great numbers, who, from their conſtitution, education, or other circumſtances, have eſcaped the inchantments of ſenſual pleaſures, and have reliſhed the delight that attends the exerciſe of their mental faculties, by much the moſt ſubſtantial, manly, and laſting enjoyment of the two, ſee, with regret and contempt, the brutiſh folly in which their fellow-creatures are engaged. They pity and deſpiſe thoſe groveling mean ſouls, who never once taſted the refined ſatisfactoin that reſults from employing the rational powers in the acquiſition of knowledge, and the diſcovery of truth. And by how much ſoever the ſoul exceeds in excellency the body, by ſo much they look upon themſelves to be better and happier than their brethren. In this they glory, in this they are really happy. In their own opinion they are wiſe, and they hope they are ſo in the opinion of all others. On the vanity that reſults from ſuch an empty conceit they feed. They are glad to be thought wiſer and better than they truly are. To gain the eſtimation of their acquaintance, they are charlatans in ſcience, and hypocrites in conduct. The natural deſire of approbation, born with them, they have transferred from God to their fellow creatures. The applauſe of men, deſerved or undeſerved, blows up their pride. On that, and on their imagined knowledge, they value themſelves: and can have no idea of any ſtate for which they would exchange their own, except one in which they might be more knowing or more eſteemed.

In the whole courſe of the lives of ſuch men, the true direction of the *heart* was never once minded. Senſual enjoyment it might not have for its object, but it had the Creator leſs; and knowledge, with the reputation of knowledge, it ardently breathed after and exulted in. To bring ſuch men to a fixed belief, that the boaſted acquiſition of their lives was no more than vanity, and vexation of ſpirit; that death muſt deliver them over to judgment, for the abuſe of thoſe noble talents which their Maker had beſtowed on them; and that there is no way to eſcape puniſhment, but by baniſhing thoſe vanities from their heart, and yielding it entirely to the God that framed it, would be no eaſy ſpot of work: every power of their mind would be employed in defence of the idol they had carved for themſelves. If religion had preſcribed only prayers, penances, building of churches, or any other tranſient act, its language might have been liſtened to: but, as it will be ſatisfied with nothing leſs than the *heart*, which is already beſtowed, no wonder philoſophers are deaf

To reſiſt the evidence that pours in upon them, from nature, from revelation, from all quarters, in behalf of religion; and to ſtifle the apprehenſions which it muſt naturally beget, they call in to their aſſiſtance that boaſted Reaſon which qualifies them to judge of God, and of all his works and ways. Him and them they try by that infallible touchſtone; and, if ought is propoſed to be believed of either, which they cannot diſtinctly comprehend the manner or cauſe of, the propoſition is immediately rejected, as abſurd and impoſſible; or, if any difficulty or objection occur to their imagination which cannot inſtantly be diſſolved, the validity of the objection is ſtraightway allowed, and the propoſition to which it relates

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is condemned. But this is not all. If the proposition condemned has revelation for its support, the whole of revelation, together with the evidence for it, are damned by the lump; because that cannot be the declaration of God, but must be a palpable forgery, which asserts any falshood, or, what is just the same, any thing that does not fall in with the notions of the learned and the wise.

THUS, because Freethinkers cannot conceive how a spirit can exist without a body, or how a body dissolved into dust, and dissipated, can be resuscitated, they doubt of a future state, and deny the resurrection; though these very wise men must admit, they have no adequate conception of the soul, or of its *manner* of existence or acting, or of the way in which it and the body were brought together.

IN like manner, what is called the *hypostatical union* in Christ, is rejected, because the *manner* of it cannot be comprehended by men; who must admit the union between soul and body in man, and must at the same time confess, they neither do, nor can, whilst they remain in their present condition, conceive how the one operates on the other.

THE doctrine of the Trinity shares the same fate; and with some more shew of reason; as, besides the difficulty of comprehending the *how* and the *wherefore*, in that doctrine, as commonly expressed, there is some appearance of contradiction in the terms, which makes it difficult to conceive what is meant to be believed. But this appearance of contradiction is owing, not to the revelation from which the knowledge of that history is derived, but to the vanity and folly of the doctors of the church; who, puffed up, even as the Freethinkers, with too good an opinion of

their own parts, would take upon them to define what revelation does not; and to coin terms not made uſe of in Scripture, to expreſs their imperfect conceptions. The words *Trinity*, and *Perſon*, or *Hypoſtaſis*, are terms not to be met with in the ſacred book: and yet to thoſe terms, and the application of them, the revolt againſt the doctrine is chiefly owing.

WHAT the Scripture acquaints us with, is this, and no more: That what it characteriſes the FATHER, the avenger of wrong, and rewarder of right, is GOD; that what it characteriſes the SON, the WORD, the Creator of the world, the Redeemer of mankind, ſent for that purpoſe by the Father, is GOD; that the HOLY SPIRIT, the correſpondent with, and Comforter of the ſpirits of men, is GOD; and that nevertheleſs the DEITY, the SELF-EXISTENT BEING, is but ONE. That theſe matters are ſo, the Scripture expreſsly declares; and the manner in which it expreſſes the laſt propoſition, *Deut.* vi. 4. is worth attending to. Our tranſlators render it, *Hear, O Iſrael, the LORD our GOD is one LORD.* The original ſays *JEHOVAH our Gods is one SELF-EXISTENT BEING*; for ſo the word tranſlated *Lord* ſignifies. Now, what is there in our knowledge, in our conceptions, or reaſon, that can qualify us to determine the *modus* of the exiſtence, or of the action of the inviſible Deity? That we have no ſort of idea of the ſubſtance of that ſoul which acts in us, or of the manner of its exiſtence or actions, is an agreed point: what impudence then muſt it be in us, to pretend to determine, from our conceptions, or rather inability to conceive, the condition, or manner of exiſtence and acting of the ſupreme Being, the leaſt of whoſe works are in very deed beyond our comprehenſion?

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THE antients, leſs refined than we, diſputed about the figure and form of the Deity; and, knowing none more perfect or noble, as they apprehended, than that of man, beſtowed upon the Deity a human ſhape and figure. The impropriety of this imagination we ſee; as we perceive, that the ideas of extenſion, ſhape, and figure, are not applicable to ſpirit, according to the idea which we have of it. But, though we have not eyes to diſcover the ſubſtance or properties of ſpirit, does it certainly follow, that they have nothing in them analogous to ſhape or figure; no properties by which they can be diſcerned, and diſtinguiſhed the one from the other, by God, or even by other ſpiritual beings, to whom he may have given eyes and underſtanding fit to perceive what we cannot? And is it not, on the other hand, clear, that there may be ſomewhat analogous to figure, ſome particular *modus* of the exiſtence of the Deity, of which our want of ideas will not permit us to form any notion?

HAD nature produced to our view ſuch living creatures as wild fiction can preſent to our fancy, compoſed of three or more diſtinct bodies, abſolutely ſeparated from each other, without any bodily connexion, but actuated by one and the ſame principle, moving by one will, acting with one conſent, each affected by the accidents that touch either, the one wounded by the blow that wounds the other, and all dying by the killing of one; we ſhould have had no diſtinct conception of what the Scripture repreſents concerning the Deity. But then, habituated to the ſight of ſuch an extraordinary creation as has been mentioned, the Scripture-doctrine would ceaſe to be ſo ſhocking as it is to our wiſe men: and yet, from their knowledge of the machinery of nature, they will hardly

take upon them to say, that the Deity could not have created such an animal as has been feigned.

If this reflexion wants any further illustration, let the vision of *Ezekiel*, chap. i. and x. be considered: Four living creatures, which he knew to be the *Cherubim*, actuated by one spirit, moving with one consent whithersoever they would; attended by as many wheels, moving spontaneously in the same manner, because the *spirit* of the *living creature* was in them. This plurality and unity, exposed in vision to the Prophet's view, must have lessened his difficulty against admitting the doctrine which so much offends our Free-thinkers, because nothing resembling it has ever offered itself to their imagination. It is not necessary at present to inquire, how far the *Cherubim* was the emblem pitched upon by the Deity to represent the divine nature, with man united to what the lion in that hieroglyphical figure denoted. It is sufficient to observe, that, if such living creatures had existed in nature, and had been seen and known, as the Prophet saw living and acting in vision, the mystery exploded by philosophers would not have been quite so incompatible with common notions as they pretend. And therefore it is absurd for wise men, to declare against a matter of fact asserted by the highest authority, for no other reason, forsooth, but that their observation or experience has presented them with nothing that should furnish an adequate idea of it.

Upon the same sort of principles, our modern reasoners reject the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction. They cannot conceive how the punishment of one who is innocent, should atone for the guilt of another. This to them appears to be contrary to the essential justice of the Deity, which ought not to take pleasure in the sufferings of the innocent; and productive of no good effect, suited to the

the character which they entertain of that exalted Being.

HERE again the temerity of thoſe preſumptuous men is notorious. That juſtice, according to our notions, will not condemn one for the fault of another, is manifeſt. But, if the innocent ſhould conſent to ſuffer for the guilty, where is the violation of juſtice in permitting it? If the innocent again has ſome great and noble end in view by ſubmitting to that ſuffering, fit to recompenſe a thouſand-fold the grief borne, where is the injuſtice of permitting him to put himſelf in the place of the guilty? If the innocent perſon is all mercy, all bowels, all compaſſion, and can ſuſtain the puniſhment which the broken-hearted repenting criminal cannot; what is ſhocking in the belief, even according to our common notions, that, to comply with the benignity of his nature, he might ſubmit to bear it? It is true we may not ſee ſo clearly why the divine juſtice ſhould be ſatisfied for the offence of one by the ſufferings of another; and that the light of nature would not have led us to diſcover, that we guilty offenders were to be delivered from puniſhment by the ſufferings of another: but is that a reaſon why we ſhould not take God's word for it, if he has been pleaſed to aſſure us that it is ſo? Do we know ſo intimately the nature of his eſſential juſtice, as to be certain that it will not permit him to accept of a vicarious ſatisfaction? Amongſt men, we know, that debt owing by one may be diſcharged by payment made by another; and are we certain, that, in the court of heaven, one man's obligation to juſtice may not be cancelled upon another's fulfilling of it? He little thinks on the unmeaſurable difference that is between the narrowneſs of the human underſtanding, and the immenſity of the divine, who dares reſt on ſuch concluſions.

ANOTHER

ANOTHER inſtance of men's making their own confined obſervations and conceptions the meaſure and touchſtone of truth, is, the prevailing opinion that diſcards providence, denies a future ſtate, and conſequently renounces the Deity, at leaſt deprives the firſt cauſe of all intelligence.

THIS notable opinion is grafted on obſervation, that the Deity does not interpoſe in any extraordinary manner in the tranſactions of this lower world; that every thing proceeds in it according to the concurrence of natural cauſes; that the ſame events befal the wicked as the virtuous, with the advantage moſt commonly on the ſide of the vitious; that the ſtrongeſt battalions, conducted by the beſt Officers, ſucceed in battle; and that vice and villainy is triumphant, when conducted by ſkill, without any appearance on the part of God in providence to prevent the effects of the wickedneſs, or to correct the authors of it: and from theſe obſervations the collection is, that all actions are indifferent, and that a future ſtate is a bugbear.

NOW, ſuppoſing theſe obſervations preciſely true, and that there is not the leaſt interpoſition of the Deity in this world, what is the neceſſary conſequence? Whether that all actions are indifferent, in flat contradiction to the cleareſt feeling and perception of the ſoul; or that there muſt be a future ſtate, in which the actors muſt ſeverally be diſtinguiſhed by rewards and puniſhments? If there are ſuch things as right and wrong, if the Deity is intelligent, and if juſtice is an attribute of that Being, the laſt muſt neceſſarily be the true concluſion. But, as the admitting it might be attended with ſome uneaſy apprehenſions, and might require a change of heart and conduct, the moral ſenſe, the moſt intimate conviction, muſt be ſmothered, and

intelligence

intelligence and juſtice denied to the infinitely perfect Being.

But, after all, on what is this important propoſition, That the Almighty has abſolutely abandoned all ſublunary things to the direction of chance, founded? Why juſt on this, That none of our wiſe men have ſeen any miracles wrought of late times; and they are not diſpoſed to think it poſſible, that any could have been wrought in the more early; and it is a truth not to be conteſted, that the unjuſt ſucceed in this world, full as well as the juſt.

But, if they were to be aſked, Whether they are certain, that no cauſe has interpoſed in the producing any event but what they have obſerved? and whether they are ſure that there are no ſecret ſprings in providence, unſeen and unthought of by them, to which important events are owing? If they would not be laughed at, they muſt anſwer in the negative; which is enough to deſtroy the certainty of their poſition.

But to examine the thing more carefully, they muſt diſtinguiſh between individuals of the human ſpecies, and ſtates and kingdoms; which by us are conſidered in ſome ſort as individuals, and may be ſo by the Ruler of the univerſe. Though men be not puniſhed or rewarded here, they may meet with what they deſerve hereafter. But, if ſtates and kingdoms are not to meet with any correction in this world, they cannot be conſidered as proper objects of it in another.

Now, it is a certain truth, that all ſtates and kingdoms, in proportion as they grow great, wealthy, and powerful, grow wanton, wicked, and oppreſſive. And the hiſtory of all ages gives evidence of the fatal cataſtrophe of all ſuch ſtates and kingdoms, when the cup of their iniquity was full: nor is it poſſible to ſhew, that any one ſtate or kingdom,

kingdom has been overturned that did not deſerve it at the hand of Providence; however little they may have deſerved it at the hand of the tyrant or oppreſſor who brought their calamity upon them. In this argument it is not neceſſary to ſay, that no unjuſt war ever proſpered. Providence may make uſe of the vitious and wicked diſpoſition of any prince, or of the ruler of any ſtate, to execute juſtice upon a power fated to puniſhment. And the only queſtion which the adverſaries to Providence have to anſwer, is, How they can be ſure, that thoſe deſerved judgments were the effect of mere fortuity, without the leaſt intervention on the part of the Lord of the univerſe?

THE courſe of providence with reſpect to individuals of the human ſpecies undergoes a very different conſideration, and ought to be viewed in a light which no Free-thinker ever thought of. If by happineſs and proſperity in this world is meant, wealth, and power, and enjoyment of all pleaſures, and ſucceſs in all purſuits; it may be ſafely allowed, that the beſt man is not the happieſt or moſt proſperous: but, if by happineſs and proſperity is meant, the full and quiet enjoyment of all the pleaſures that man, conſidered as a rational being, is capable of; and ſucceſs in all the purſuits in which, as a reaſonable creature, he ought to engage; there is no doubt, that the good man will be found to be the moſt completely happy; and with that good man as little doubt, that the Maker and Sovereign Lord of man has not abandoned the care of him to blind chance.

THE man who, forgetting all regards for the Author of his being and happineſs, centers all his views upon himſelf; who, born with a vigorous body and keen appetites, ſucceeds to, or acquires means to gratify all his brutal deſires, and plunges into the enjoyment of whatever his luſt directs him

him to, is not, in the eyes of the moſt freethinking philoſopher, happy. His purſuits, as well as his enjoyments, are mean and beaſtly; ſurfeits and accidental diſeaſes interrupt the courſe of his felicity; age, with its attendant infirmities, diſſolve the charm that bound him; pleaſures of all ſorts loſe their reliſh; and the terrors, which death unavoidably muſt bring, are no way to be evited, but by baniſhing all thoughts of death from the mind. Such a man's poſſeſſions and enjoyments cannot denote him happy; nor would a wiſe man pray for theſe bleſſings as the portion with which he was to be contented, unleſs he might obtain this other boon, that he ſhould never decay nor die.

No philoſopher that breathes the air, is ſo ſilly as to maintain, that the objects of the purſuits of the avaritious, or of the ambitious, whether in the political or martial way, are objects fit for the purſuit of a rational creature; or that ſucceſs in thoſe purſuits is fit to denote ſuch a creature happy. And, if they will take an impartial view of their own boaſted felicity; if they will draw up a fair account of the ſum of their learning and knowledge, and of the happineſs they have taſted in the acquiſition and enjoyment of thoſe bleſſings; and if they will candidly ſet againſt it the diſcoveries they muſt have made of the ſcantineſs of their knowledge, and the weakneſs of their underſtanding, and their neceſſary dependence on ſomewhat not within themſelves for their exiſtence, which they never have thought fit to acknowledge; or, however, adding to thoſe reflexions the certainty of death, and the uncertainty of what may come after: the balance of the account will doubtleſs ſtand on the wrong ſide; and will ſhew, that though they have been more happy, or rather leſs miſerable than the profligate of the higher

higher or lower claſs of mankind, yet neither their purſuits nor acquiſitions can give them any title to conſider themſelves, or to be conſidered by others, as really happy.

Now, on the other hand, let the caſe of that man be conſidered, who, delivered from the ſlavery of thoſe vices and follies, and acquainted with the end for which he was created, endeavours with all his powers to anſwer the deſign. Such a one taſtes the ſame pleaſure in all ſenſual enjoyments as the greateſt epicure; and has as quick a reliſh of all mental joys that proceed from the purſuit, or from the diſcovery of truth, as the greateſt philoſopher.

But then he ſees with the philoſopher, that thoſe ſenſual enjoyments are mean and beaſtly, unworthy of the purſuit of rational creatures; that they are annexed to the performance of the animal functions, to induce men to do acts neceſſary for their own preſervation, and the propagation of the ſpecies; but which they never would think of, but for the appetites implanted in them, and the pleaſure which attends the gratification of the appetites; and that ſatiety and uneaſineſs accompanies the purſuit of thoſe pleaſures any farther than nature requires.

And he ſees, by the exerciſe of his rational powers, what few philoſophers attend to, that the eyes of his mind were given him to diſcover the immenſity, the power, the wiſdom, and the goodneſs of the Creator in his works; to diſcover that overflowing bounty of that perfect Being to him, and his conſtant dependence on the Author and Source of his happineſs; to diſcover the numberleſs obligations he lies under, with reverence and gratitude, to obey and adore the Sovereign of the univerſe; to diſcover his duty towards his Creator; to diſcover, that the favour

of

of the Almighty muſt attend performance of duty, as his diſpleaſure muſt follow the ungrateful breach of it: to diſcover, that the favour of God is the only object worthy of the purſuit of the heart of man; and to diſcover, that the beſtowing that heart, and all the deſires of it, on ſenſual brutiſh pleaſures, or any other vanity, to the excluſion of the *Eternal*, is the moſt horrid, as well as the moſt fooliſh crime that can be imagined.

THE pleaſures of life are enjoyed by this man with as much, perhaps with more reliſh, than by the libertine. But then they do not pervert the heart. The only motion they are capable of exciting there, is, gratitude and thankfulneſs to the beneficent Donor. The acquiſition of knowledge is taſted by him with as much delight as it is by the philoſopher; though it produces in them different effects. The one is puffed up with pride and preſumption; the other it fills with humility, and reverence for the Moſt High.

The man who has fixed his heart on the proper object, does not ceaſe to taſte with pleaſure the common bleſſings of this life: neither does he fail to beſtow the proper induſtry to acquire, and to preſerve them. But then he conſiders them only as ſo many ſugar-plumbs given by the Creator to make his confinement to his priſon of clay more palatable; which muſt have an end, when his enlargement begins. He laments the unhappy condition of thoſe who ſeek after them as their chief good. He would neither acquire or preſerve them at the expence of doing one ſingle act that might forfeit the favour of his Maker and Benefactor: neither does he repine at the privation of them; knowing, that it could not happen without the will and pleaſure of his Lord and Maſter, the Sovereign of the univerſe, to which his heart and will chearfully ſubmit.

COMPARE

COMPARE the happineſs of this man with that of the greateſt favourite of fortune, who has ſet his heart on other objects, and who has had the full gratification of all his appetites, ſo far as the courſe of humanity will permit; but who muſt die, and leave thoſe enjoyments, uncertain what is to happen hereafter. This man enjoys, in common with the wiſe and the voluptuous of his rank in the world, all the ſenſual and mental pleaſures in which they delight, without the alloy that muſt torture their minds, when they think of parting with them. But then he has in himſelf a conſtant ſource of unalloyed joy, to which they are utter ſtrangers. The abundant goodneſs of the giver of all thoſe bleſſings fills his ſoul with gratitude and thankfulneſs, and diſpoſes him with joy to do what appears to him to be his duty; and conſciouſneſs of that happy diſpoſition produces the moſt firm confidence and reliance on the favour and good-will of his omnipotent Benefactor; from which he is to look hereafter for joys of a different nature from thoſe which in this life he ſlights, when they ſtand in the way of his duty. Every act of duty performed fills his ſoul with a placid, ſtill ſatisfaction, that is ſenſibly felt, though not eaſily expreſſed. A mouthful of meat, beſtowed on a hungry beggar, gives the heart of the donor more real ſatisfaction, than the reliſh of the food gives pleaſure to the craving ſtomach, or the moſt delicious dainty gives to the vitiated palates of the voluptuous. And the particular excellency of theſe enjoyments is, that no exceſs can ſurfeit or pall the appetite, no accident can deprive him of them.

To a man poſſeſſed of ſuch an incorruptible ſtock of happineſs, the pleaſures of this life appear but mere baubles; and the privation of them a trifling

trifling loſs. Life itſelf he is diſpoſed to reſign with willingneſs, becauſe to him death has no ſting.

If then felicity in this life, does not depend upon what are called the gifts of fortune, but on the diſpoſition of ſoul that has been deſcribed, with what countenance can any Freethinker maintain, that in this world there is no interpoſition of the act of the Deity, no ſpecial providence? It may indeed be true, that wealth, and honours, and power do not attend the moſt deſerving; and that halters, and infamy, and want do not lay hold on the vitious: but will it follow, from our not being able to ſee the hand of Providence in the diſtribution of thoſe periſhing favours on which the real happineſs of man does not depend, that the Framer of the hearts of men has no communication with them, and never interpoſes to determine them to that wherein their chief felicity conſiſts?

The proofs of the goodneſs and juſtice of God, of the duty and dependence of man, of the certainty of rewards and puniſhments, of the deſperate condition of thoſe, who, neglecting God and their duty, purſue fading pleaſures and vanity with their whole ſpirit; and of the real and permanent happineſs of ſuch as enjoy all the giſts of God with thankfulneſs, and gratefully make it the buſineſs of their lives to obey his will and to obtain his favour, are ſo conſpicuous, that nothing ſeems to be wanted towards the producing *conviction*, but ſomewhat that ſhall turn their eye, and fix the attention upon them; becauſe, if they are duly conſidered and attended to, the evidence is irreſiſtible. Now, as that attention may be raiſed by various incidents, ſometimes by ſickneſs and diſtreſſes of different kinds, ſometimes by a happy education, ſometimes by the converſation of pious perſons, and ſometimes by reading and meditation,

tion, which a thouſand circumſtances ſeemingly accidental concur to improve; why ſhould we conclude, that all theſe incidents are purely accidental; and that the perſon transformed, by them, from a brute to a happy man, owes the change to blind chance? Whatever vain reaſoners may imagine or babble, the perſon whoſe eyes are opened by thoſe incidents, acknowledges with gratitude the hand of God in them.

BUT, though Freethinkers might be excuſed for concluding, however raſhly, that Providence does not interpoſe in the government of the external tranſactions of this world, becauſe, after all the obſervations they can make, they have not complete evidence to the contrary; yet what excuſe can they have for pretending to judge, that the merciful and beneficent Spirit of God does not work upon the ſpirits of men? From their proper experience they can draw no obſervation, as they have locked out all regards for the Deity from their heart; and what paſſes in the ſpirits of other men they can have no knowledge of, nor indeed any idea, as they have ſuffered no ſuch tranſactions to take place in their own.

PHILOSOPHERS have talked much of action and reaction in matter, and imagine they underſtand what they ſay; what ſhould hinder them to believe, that there may be ſuch a thing as action and reaction between ſpirits, even between the infinitely perfect Spirit and the ſpirits of finite men? If gratitude obſerved in a dog produces ſome regard and kindneſs in the mind of his maſter, why may not the gratitude, the warmth of the heart of man, work ſome ſimilar effect in the all-ſeeing Mind? and who dare preſume to ſay, that it may not act on, and comfort the ſpirit of man in return? If that beneficent and all-powerful Spirit does not ſhew his kindneſs in beſtowing wealth,

wealth, and power, and fading pleaſures, it is becauſe they are not real goods; becauſe they are not the object of the heart and wiſhes of the party favoured; and becauſe, in place of doing them real good, they might call off the affections from that exerciſe wherein his true felicity conſiſts. And this is ſo true, that croſſes, diſappointments, and diſtreſſes, may juſtly be conſidered as acts of the greateſt kindneſs, when they tend to recal the ſtraying mind from vanity, and to fix it on its proper object.

How then dares preſumptuous ſhort-ſighted man deny the interpoſition of Providence, becauſe he does not ſee the ſecret ſpring by which it acts, or know the intentions of the Inſcrutable? Or how can he, becauſe a ſatisfactory reaſon does not appear to him for the long-ſuffering patience and forbearance of the Moſt Merciful, doubt of the exiſtence or juſtice of that Being; deny a future ſtate; or maintain the indifference of all actions, as to right and wrong? But ſuch is the fatal effect of the corruption of man's heart, and of the deflection of it from the true object to vice and vanity.

The extreme folly of modern Freethinkers is much leſs accountable or excuſable than that of the antients. The antients had no certain lights but thoſe of nature. Thoſe naturally led them to ſee the vanity of the purſuits wherein they were engaged, the depravity of the human nature, and the conſequences which might attend their courſes hereafter. Thoſe were but melancholy reflexions, leading to deſpair, and tending to ſour every enjoyment; as they had no certain intimation, that any method was chalked out by the Deity for the expiation of ſin, and for reſtoring offending man to his favour and protection. And therefore it is not to be wondered at, that they baniſhed from their

their thoughts ſuch gloomy uncomfortable ſpeculations. But our modern madmen hear every day of mercy and pardon offered by the offended Deity to offending ſinners, if they will receive it thankfully. They are told, that this is the declared will of God, and that there is complete evidence of its being ſuch; and they ſee, that this is the belief of numbers of the moſt ſagacious and inquiſitive of their fellow-creatures. But all this will not do. Their heart is given to other objects; and they hear, that theſe muſt be diſmiſſed before they can ſhare of the pardon proffered.

To keep however their countenance, and the character of Freethinkers, they muſt aſſign ſome reaſon for their revolting againſt revelation. And this they readily do. They ſay, falſely, that they have carefully examined all the evidence for revelation; and they ſay, honeſtly and truly, that all the evidence which they have conſidered, has not been ſufficient to ſatisfy their objections, and to convince them, that what is called revelation is really ſuch.

THAT they have carefully examined *all* the evidence, is abſolutely falſe. No man ever did, or can do ſo, without receiving perfect conviction. It is a queſtion, whether any profeſſed Freethinker, who has hitherto appeared, had learning or talents ſufficient to examine the evidence. It is certain, that none who have wrote, have diſcovered that they had either.

MEN may ſearch for arguments *à priori* for the proof of any propoſition that may reſult from the nature of things known to them. That treachery to our neighbour, and ingratitude to the God that made us, are highly offenſive, and ought to be puniſhed by perfect juſtice, may be demonſtrated *à priori*. But, if ſovereign goodneſs

neſs and mercy, to deliver repenting men from deſerved puniſhment, has contrived a method of ſalvation by ſending his ſon into the world to ſuffer for them; and if, to prevent their deſpair, and to encourage their repentance and amendment, that beneficent Being has been pleaſed to publiſh his pardon, with the conditions of it, to mankind; this muſt be admitted to be a matter of fact not diſcoverable by any indictions *à priori*; becauſe it is in ſome ſort adverſary to our general notions of right and wrong; and therefore, to have any effect on the minds of men, muſt have been publiſhed with ſuch a degree of evidence, as muſt neceſſarily gain full belief; and if it was the intention of the Author of this publication, that it ſhould gain belief in future ages, the evidence muſt be of that nature that is fit to carry conviction to all for whom the publication was intended.

ACCORDINGLY this revelation, which was made ſoon after the firſt tranſgreſſion, was renewed from time time, under circumſtances ſo diſtinguiſhed, as could not poſſibly leave any doubt, that it was the declaration of the Deity. And, by wiſdom and power more than human, ſuch a ſort of evidence has been contrived and preſerved for the authority of that revelation, as far exceeds, in point of certainty, the proof of any other event that ever happened. That ſuch cities as *Babylon* and *Carthage* exiſted: that *Cæſar* won the battle of *Pharſalia*, and was murdered in the *Roman* ſenate, no one doubts. But, if all the documents for the authority of revelation were brought together, the proof in this laſt caſe is by ſo much ſtronger than that in the others, as the belief of it is more intereſting to mankind.

BUT the different degrees of credit given to the one and to the other, ariſe from the different diſpoſitions

diſpoſitions of the hearts of men. There is no prejudice in the mind of man againſt admitting the firſt; againſt the laſt there is this violent bias, that, if it is admitted, men muſt become in their own eyes miſerable wretches, and muſt diſmiſs thoſe luſts and vanities on which they doated. To prevent this diſgrace and irreparable damage, arms muſt be taken up againſt the evidence that inſults their quiet; any objection, (of which there are, and muſt be multitudes), if it cannot eaſily be anſwered, is a demonſtration ſuperior to all the evidence for revelation; and they look into revelation, and to the evidence for it, only to arm themſelves with ſuch objections.

It is indeed no wonder, that men whoſe prejudices ſtand ſo much in the way of believing, do not give themſelves the trouble to ſearch after, and to collect *all* the proofs for revelation. It is a laborious work. All the remains of antient hiſtory, and the compoſures of the learned of thoſe times, muſt be examined; all the rites, opinions, and practices of nations, ſo far as they can be diſcovered, muſt be conſidered; all the monuments of antiquity, now extant, muſt be ſurveyed: a reaſonable knowledge of the languages in which revelation is recorded, muſt be attained; and the conſequences that have attended that revelation ſince the advent of Chriſt, muſt be adverted to, before one can ſay that he is poſſeſſed of all the evidence, and before he can form a judgment of many of the objections which Freethinkers move. But, that none of them who have wrote have given themſelves this trouble, is plain from their writings; which contain little more than ſmatterings of learning, to which the *Jews* have helped them, and which they ſeem, without due examination, to have taken on truſt.

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THOUGH it has pleaſed the merciful wiſdom of God, to ſcatter proofs of his revelation over all the antient nations, and to preſerve documents of them down to our days, for the conviction of obſtinate infidels, and for the confirmation of the faith of the inquiſitive who believe; yet, happily for the bulk of mankind, who have neither time nor talents for ſuch inquiries, revelation is ſo calculated, as to require nothing of man that his conſcious ſoul does not ſee to be his duty; and to promiſe him nothing that does not appear to his moſt inward ſenſe to be the neceſſary conſequence of doing it. By it he is acquainted with his forlorn condition; which he needs do no more to diſcover to be truth, than to turn his eyes inward upon himſelf. And a remedy is pointed out adequate to the diſeaſe; which tends to magnify the mercy, the wiſdom, and the goodneſs of the Creator; and to tie the creature to him, by ſtill ſtronger bonds of duty and gratitude.

IN this ſyſtem there is ſuch harmony between duty and intereſt, and therefore ſuch a propenſity in every ſober-thinking perſon to wiſh it to be true, that, from the declared opinions of others, better qualified to judge of the evidence, and to determine, it gains belief; and that very belief, influencing the practice, brings real tranquillity and happineſs in this life, ſpringing from confidence of the favour of the Almighty; a ſure earneſt of future felicity. But by the debauched and the giddy, who have delivered themſelves over ſoul and body to their luſts, and to their vanity, this aptitude, this harmony is not diſcovered. Their fears make them wiſh it may not be true. Objections are rife in every corner; and, if any inquiry is made into the proofs, it is with an intent to object, and to find them inſufficient.

AND one of the main objections is, That there is place for any objection againſt the certainty of revelation. Why, ſay thoſe reaſoners, if it had been the intention of the Almighty, that what is called the revelation of his will ſhould have been believed by all mankind to be ſuch, he would have accompanied it with ſuch evidence as ſhould have been at firſt ſight ſuperior to all objections, and muſt have convinced and converted all infidels: but ſince he has not done ſo, but, on the contrary, room is left for many objections, the concluſion is juſt, that this pretended revelation is none of his. And it muſt be admitted, the inference would be pretty juſt, on ſuppoſal of the propoſition, That it was the intention of the Deity to convince and convert all infidels, however wicked and reprobate. For it is not to be controverted, that it was in the power of the Almighty to have accompanied revelation with conſtant ſtanding miracles, even as it was in his power to have created man with a ſmaller ſhare of free-will, and, by perpetual interpoſition of his grace, to have prevented his actual defection from his duty. But upon what principle is it ſuppoſed, that God intended, or ought to have intended, to extend his grace alike to all; to the obſtinate and flagitious, as well as to the ſober and the humble ſinner? The diſcretion of men makes a wide difference between thoſe characters; and how can we be ſure, that the judgment of God does not ſo alſo?

THE mercy of God has provided an atonement ſufficient to expiate the ſins of all mankind, who will take hold of it. The wiſdom of God has contrived evidence ſufficient to convince all mankind, that ſuch atonement is provided, if they will give themſelves the trouble to examine it. But then it is ſo contrived, as to reach with conviction thoſe only who are diſpoſed to take hold of it; that is,

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the meek and the humble, who are conſcious of their diſtreſs by nature, and deſirous to be delivered from it. And them it reaches, becauſe they think it worth their while to inquire after, and to examine it; whilſt it does not convince, nor indeed can it poſſibly, the proud and the ſtubborn, who ſlight the atonement provided ſo much, and are ſo thoroughly averſe to comply with the condition upon which it is to be obtained, that, without troubling their heads with the evidence, they inſolently reject the mercy of the Moſt High. Who then can find fault with the divine goodneſs on this article? The meek ſurely will not; and the proud, who have themſelves only to blame, ought not.

So the ſum of the wiſe objection is this, That the good and juſt God did not intend, that ſalvation ſhould reach thoſe deſperately wicked ſinners who refuſed to accept of it. But this objection weighs with thoſe who have never turned their thoughts upon the heinouſneſs of their own guilt; and have formed to themſelves notions of the benignity of the Deity, from the falſe notions of generoſity which they have encouraged in themſelves, laying entirely aſide his juſtice and his purity.

FROM the ſame ſource ſprings another objection, of equal validity as to revelation, founded on the doctrine of the perpetuity of puniſhment. Here again the incomprehenſible, the infinitely perfect Being, is meaſured by the ſpan of the low, blind, groveling creature that makes the objection; who, becauſe he cannot comprehend why this juſtice is ſuited to the divine nature, concludes at once, that the doctrine is impoſſible, and therefore falſe; and, in conſequence, rejects the revelation which is ſaid to aſſert it, without giving himſelf the trouble to examine the evidence that ſupports that revelation, or to inquire whether the matter

that thus ſhocks him, is really revealed. A careful inquiry might poſſibly ſatisfy him, that the perpetuity of puniſhments is not abſolutely affirmed; and that no more is neceſſarily to be inferred from revelation, than that the miſery of the damned is to endure for ages. But ſuch an inquiry would give him competent ſatisfaction, that the revelation he wantonly rejects, is in very deed the word of God; and would diſpoſe him to believe whatever it clearly declares concerning the Deity and his ways, without conſidering how far that might or might not tally with his conceits.

And herein lies the monſtrous, the ſurpriſing folly of the vain philoſopher. Every new obſervation, every diſcovery, which his ſagacity has been accidentally led to make in nature, and which blows up his pride, becomes to him a freſh proof of his own weakneſs and ſhort-ſightedneſs, and of the immenſity of the Deity, of the perfection of his wiſdom, and of the inſcrutability of his ways to man in his preſent condition: and yet, from his narrow notions, he will pretend to decide what God ought, or ought not, what he can, or cannot do.

In the pittance of the material world which falls within his ken, the obſervations of the infinite wiſdom, contrivance, and power of the Creator, daily grow upon him; new and unaccountable properties in matter, acting by unerring rules, and tending to the perfection of the whole, hourly pour in upon him; the magnet, the microſcope, the teleſcope, the priſm, the air-pump, the crucible, electricity, *&c.* furniſh him with complete evidence, that he knows nothing of the real nature of *matter*, which he ſees, taſtes, and feels, whereof he is in part compoſed, and in which he is at preſent immerſed; and give him undoubted reaſons to conclude, that there may be, or rather that there are

are numberleſs other properties in matter, and rules of acting which it ſteadily purſues, of which he at preſent has no knowledge, and poſſibly, ſo long as he is confined to clay, never can.

By what means then is he to judge of the ſpiritual world, of which he neither has, nor can have any adequate idea? A ſpirit acting in himſelf he feels, and is conſcious of its actings; but what it is compoſed of, or how it acts, is all hidden from him. That there may be as many different claſſes of *ſpirits*, as there are tribes of animals or plants, he dare not deny; though he can have no conception of the manner of their difference, or of the uſes for which they may be in the creation. That the Creator is ſpiritual, he collects with certainty from the aſtoniſhing wiſdom and artifice of ſo much of the univerſe as is diſcloſed to him; that he is good and bountiful in a ſovereign degree, his works declare; and that he is poſſeſſed of all poſſible perfections, his ſelf-exiſtence demonſtrates. But whence comes man to take upon him to determine, what perfection in any of his attributes is; that the juſtice of God muſt go thus far, and no farther; that his mercy requires he ſhould, or ſhould not do this or that; or that his goodneſs ought, or ought not to operate on ſuch an occaſion? This, ſure, is the moſt aſtoniſhing preſumption! Suppoſing him to have an adequate idea of juſtice, mercy, and goodneſs, as thoſe muſt be by the Deity exerciſed in ſupreme harmony, as well as perfection; how dare he preſume to define, how far the exerciſe of either of them may go? Common ſenſe, and that modeſty which ought to attend conſciouſneſs of our dimneſs of ſight, would direct us, when any thing in the ways or will of God appears that we cannot account for, to receive and acquieſce in it with humble ſubmiſſion, and to believe that it is right and juſt.

WHEREFORE, when we ſee the whole brute creation, animate as well as inanimate, purſuing conſtantly, and without erring, the intention of God in their formation; and when we obſerve, in that part of the rational creation which is known to us, the higheſt diſorder and confuſion, rebellion againſt God, injuſtice towards men, fraud and falſhood triumphant, virtue and ſincerity deſpiſed and oppreſſed, and guilt contracted that muſt neceſſarily terminate in puniſhment, all the conſequence of the freedom of will in man; let us not conclude, as madmen are apt to do, that all actions are indifferent to the Deity, or that no puniſhment is to attend guilt, upon a ſuppoſal, that it would have been unbecoming the benignity of God, who muſt have foreſeen the conſequence of free-will in man, to have brought into the world ſo many millions of rational creatures, who, he foreſaw, muſt become the objects of wrath and puniſhment.

NOTHING is more certain, than that free-will has been the cauſe of tranſgreſſion in man; and that the Deity muſt have foreknown the effects it was to produce. But are we ſure, that, in the ſcale of eſſential juſtice, it was not right and juſt, to have created man in a ſtate of happineſs, with a fitneſs and capacity to preſerve that ſtate, and to acquire one higher, and with a power to chuſe between good and evil; with a ſanction, that, if he preferred evil to good, he muſt bear the diſmal conſequences of that perverſe choice? Do we perfectly know the nature of the ſovereignty and right which the Creator has to diſpoſe of the creatures which he has made? Or are we acquainted with all the motives that induced the Moſt High to create man ſo qualified? Is it certain, that no good effect, worthy the divine goodneſs, to other parts of the unbounded creation, could have flowed from

from the fate of man? Or is it clear, that we are intitled to judge of the fitneſs of any part of God's ways or works, without conſidering the relation it has to, and the effect it has on the whole? Until theſe queſtions meet with ſatisfactory anſwers, nothing can be more ſilly than to conclude as Freethinkers do.

A ſober man, on the contrary, who ſees and laments the diſorders of mankind, will not give up the moral ſenſe of his ſoul as to the merit or demerit of human actions; nor will he give up the juſtice or goodneſs of God, becauſe he cannot preciſely aſſign the motive that induced the Deity to endue man with that proportion of free-will with which he is poſſeſſed. Full conviction of the infinite diſproportion that is between his limited underſtanding, and that of the ſelf-exiſtent Being, leads him to conclude with certainty, that his not being able to comprehend any thing, is not evidence that the Moſt High cannot. He may entertain himſelf profitably, at leaſt pleaſantly, in meditating on ſuch ſubjects: but, though his invention ſhould fail of ſolving the difficulty, he will not on that account deny principles, nor impeach the juſtice or goodneſs of his Maker.

THAT the end of God in creating man, endued with free-will, and with that proportion of reaſon, and of appetites, wherewith he was poſſeſſed, was not to diſcover to himſelf what uſe man was to make of thoſe talents, muſt be evident to all who admit the omniſcience and preſcience of the Deity. But it is not ſo evident, that one of the motives of the Creator for framing man ſo qualified, may not have been, to render his juſtice and his mercy conſpicuous to mankind; and to ſhew thoſe attributes, as well as the effects of free-will left to chuſe between the dictates of reaſon and the bent of appetites, to other

claſſes of rational beings, to us at preſent unknown.

HAD all the rational creation unerringly purſued the dictates of reaſon, that is, had they unerringly done their duty, there would have been no occaſion for diſplaying the juſtice or the mercy of God. His immenſity, his eternity, his aſtoniſhing power, goodneſs and wiſdom, were legible in his works; and it ſeems unreaſonable to doubt, that one of the ends of the creation was, to exhibit to rational creatures complete evidence of thoſe glorious attributes and qualities. But, unleſs ſome rational creature had offended, there could have been no example of juſtice, nor any object for mercy.

BEFORE any treſpaſs committed, every rational being that ſuppoſed revolting againſt ſovereign goodneſs poſſible, muſt have concluded, that the guilty deſerved to be, and would be purſued by the vengeance of the omnipotent. But in what manner juſtice required that this vengeance ſhould be exerted, it could have no comprehenſion of; far leſs could it have any conception, that eſſential juſtice, ungratefully affronted, ſhould ſuffer thoughts of mercy to interpoſe in behalf of the inſolent offender, and ſhould deviſe a method, conſiſtent with juſtice, to deliver the criminal from puniſhment, and reſtore him to his priſtine favour.

BUT the abuſe of free-will has given occaſion to the manifeſtation of thoſe divine qualities, which otherwiſe might have remained unknown to men and angels, in a light ſo diſtinguiſhed, as muſt needs produce admiration, with praiſe and adoration, and give a more noble and intereſting idea of the perfection of the Deity.

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We know but too well, that man has fallen; and the Scripture acquaints us with the revolt of ſome of the angels. Their crime, we are told, met with inſtant condemnation and puniſhment, but man's with a very different uſage. The convicted and aſhamed offender had hopes of mercy immediately given him. Infinite wiſdom found means to ſatisfy eſſential juſtice, and to make way for the diſplay of mercy, that glorious and adorable attribute of the Moſt High.

The cauſe of this diverſity we can but gueſs at. The weakneſs of man, and the temptations he was liable to, we know; but the condition and temptation of the tranſgreſſing angels we are not acquainted with. If we may however conjecture, their knowledge, capacity, and power was far beyond that of man; and conſequently their defection leſs excuſable: and accordingly we find their condemnation was by ſo much the more prompt and ſevere. Whereas, with reſpect to man, the execution of the ſentence againſt him was ſuſpended; mercy was offered; a method of reconciliation with the Deity was ſet on foot; repeated intimations were made by the clement Deity of this purpoſe of grace; repeated and renewed inſtitutions were backed by divine authority, to recal men to their duty; the ſovereign and eſſentially juſt Lord of the univerſe was pleaſed to proclaim himſelf merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering and patient; and, through a long ſucceſſion of ages, that declaration has by experience been found to be ſtrictly true. His long-ſuffering, accompanied with continual invitations to accept of pardon, endures to this moment, to the inexpreſſible joy of thoſe that love and fear him; though it muſt at laſt turn to the utter confuſion of thoſe who heedleſsly or wilfully reject the proffered grace.

In the treatment of the fallen angels, for whom we know no ſhadow of excuſe, nothing but ſtrict juſtice appears. In the treatment of man, the ſeverity of the juſtice of the Eternal is made conſpicuous, chiefly by the atonement which his mercy has provided to expiate the guilt, and avoid the puniſhment of unhappy creatures. But that boundleſs pity and compaſſion, that eſſential mercy, and that unwearied patience, which has been, and ſtill is exerciſed towards ungrateful man, could never have appeared to men and angels, if the abuſe of free-will had not given occaſion for the diſplay of it.

It is idle to inquire, becauſe it ſeems impoſſible to diſcover, what gave occaſion to the revolt of the fallen angels. But it is probable, their ſudden and ſevere puniſhment has prevented treſpaſſes of the like nature. The exertion of the juſtice and power of the Eternal muſt have made a deep impreſſion upon all ſpirits of the angelick order. And, if the rectitude of the remaining choir is owing to the puniſhment of the rebellious crew, who will preſume to find fault with God, for giving angels ſuch a portion of free-will as to leave them fallible, or for reſorting to rigid juſtice for the puniſhment of their offence?

Had man, upon his firſt offence, been treated as he deſerved; had threatened death immediately followed his crime, there would have been an end of the ſpecies; but there would have been no inſtance of the mercy, the tender-heartedneſs, the long-ſuffering of the Sovereign Being; none to ſing his praiſes, or to bleſs him, on account of that divine attribute. As his perfect wiſdom and exuberant grace has contrived it, millions of the human race, who have taſted of his goodneſs in this reſpect, feaſt their ſouls on the contemplation of

of his amazing condeſcendence, and with their whole ſpirit adore and bleſs him.

And if it cannot be doubted, that the end of the formation of myriads of various plants, and other inanimate productions, is, to give to intelligent minds ſome ſort of idea of the wiſdom, the power, and the goodneſs of the Creator; why will conceited men quarrel with the divine œconomy regarding the human race? ſince, without that part of it to which they object, there could have been no tolerable idea of the mercy or the long-ſuffering of the Deity, nor any heart to rejoice, or tongue to bleſs him, on that account.

But this reflexion goes ſtill farther. We have heard of other rational creatures, beſides ourſelves, under the appellation of *angels*; ſome of whom fell, as we have done: and we know not whether any, or what diverſity there may be of kinds amongſt them. Thus much however may be concluded, that we cannot with any certainty determine, that there may not be between the ſupreme Being and us a vaſt variety of rational beings diſtinct from the human ſpecies, and differing from it as to the extent of underſtanding, affections, and inclinations; and, conſidering the immenſity of the univerſe, the high probability, is, that ſuch beings there are.

Now, if it may be further ſuppoſed, that thoſe rational beings have any cogniſance of what happens amongſt the children of men, why may we not alſo ſuppoſe, that their information on this grand article was one of the ends in view with the Creator, when man was framed with that capacity to err that brought on the fall?

That angels, who are believed to have been formed very pure and perfect, were poſſeſſed of free-will, is plain; becauſe they made a bad uſe of it, and fell. And if there are various claſſes

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of angels, and different ſpecies of ſpiritual or rational beings between the higheſt order of angels and us, their actions muſt, at leaſt, according to our conception of the actions of rational beings, may be determined by choice. And it is impoſſible for us to ſay, what diverſity there may be in the underſtandings and capacities of thoſe different ranks of creatures; what propenſities or inducements to perſevere in purſuing their duty, or what diſpoſitions or temptations to err.

Now, who can tell how many myriads of thoſe creatures may owe the ſtate of felicity they now enjoy, to the correction of the lapſed angels, and to the ſcene of miſery and folly which the conduct of the vain conceited part of mankind has, almoſt ever ſince the creation of this ſyſtem, preſented them with?

If a philoſopher views with juſt contempt the ſcandalous ſprings from which the actions of the vitious proceed, what muſt be the ſenſe of intelligent beings of a ſuperior order? How fooliſh, as well as odious, muſt the notions of wicked men be in their eyes? And how noble and magnificent muſt their idea be of the mercy and long-ſuffering of the Eternal, who, for ſo great a ſeries of ages, has been following ſuch wretches with perpetual offers of forgiveneſs and felicity? If in ſuch minds there are any appetites or impulſions ſimilar to thoſe that lead the vain and the wicked of the human race aſtray, how careful muſt they be to reſtrain ſuch deſires; and how thankful to their Maker, for the admonition that has put them on their guard? * * * * *

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SOME THOUGHTS CONCERNING RELIGION, NATURAL and REVEALED.

SOME THOUGHTS CONCERNING *RELIGION*, &c.

IT is impoſſible to view the immenſity, the variety, the harmony, and the beauty of the univerſe, without concluding it to be the workmanſhip of a Being infinitely powerful, wiſe, and good.

It is impoſſible to examine the ſtructure of the moſt inconſiderable plant or animal, without being ſurpriſed with ſuch admirable contrivance, as pronounces the author infinitely intelligent, and excludes all ſuſpicion that it ow'd its origin to blind chance.

The vegetable world is adjuſted with ſuch amazing ſkill, that each plant, perfect in its own kind, is ſupported, and propagated, mechanically, by the unerring action of the ſun, the air, and the earth where it grows: its ſeeds, by that mechaniſm, produce new plants of the ſame kind; and the herb, that periſhes with the ſeaſon, clothes the fields with the ſame livery againſt the next. That brute matter, inert, and inſenſible, ſhould be framed ſo as to perform ſuch wonders, ſhews wiſdom, and power, far beyond the comprehenſion of the moſt perfect man.

The action of the material powers in this ſyſtem upon the organized body of a plant, preſerves, and propagates it: its roots ſhoot out into the ſoil where it grows; there it finds abundant aliment for perfecting its trunk, and preparing its ſeeds; and thoſe ſeeds are dropped where they meet the like encouragement. But it is not ſo with animals: the moſt perfect of the kind, left to the direction of material and mechanical powers only, muſt periſh without rearing any ſucceſſion.

Vegetables and animals are ſo far ſimilar, that both require conſtant ſupplies of freſh juices; but in this they differ, that nature mechanically reaches to the one the ſupply it wants, whereas the other muſt, by ſome act of its own, find, and fetch it: and therefore, in animals, beſides matter and mechaniſm, there is an active principle; ſomewhat, of which we have no conception or knowledge but by its effects, that finds, prepares, and takes in proper nouriſhment, and determines to the propagation and preſervation of its own ſpecies.

By what ſort of mechaniſm this principle acts on, or is affected by, the meer matter to which it is joined, we cannot at all conceive; but this we ſee, that it calls all the brute animal creation to thoſe acts that are neceſſary for ſelf-preſervation, and propagating the ſpecies: each claſs of animals is highly induſtrious to compaſs theſe ends; and, if we may judge by what we feel tranſacting in the brute part of ourſelves, there is in them a ſtrong deſire to do thoſe acts that are neceſſary for the ſupport of themſelves, and a very ſenſible pleaſure attending the gratification of that deſire.

It does not appear to us that plants are ſenſible of pleaſure or pain; whereas animals, we know, are

are affected by both. To a plant it is indifferent whether it is ſupported or not; but to an animal it is not ſo: it taſtes felicity in receiving the neceſſary ſupplies, and languiſhes under want: the pleaſures it receives in feeding, is the motive to look for food, and it is bribed tc ſupport itſelf by the happineſs it meets with in taking in its nouriſhment. What the plant does neceſſarily, the animal does from choice, and is highly rewarded, by the pleaſure it receives for every act of its duty in preſerving itſelf, and propagating.

Who can give attention to this œconomy, and at the ſame time reflect on the profuſe ſupply that nature every where affords, for the ſupport of the infinite numbers of animals, of different kinds, that ſwarm upon this globe, without concluding, that over-flowing goodneſs and benevolence is an attribute of the infinitely wiſe, and powerful, Author of nature?

In looking over the whole animal creation, one ſees infinite variety of inſtincts, and talents, ſome approaching nearer, ſome more remote from, thoſe diſpoſitions that are to be met with in man, but all tending to the preſervation of the creature poſſeſs'd of them; but it does not appear to us, that the ſagacity, or diſcerning, of the brute goes any further than to its own immediate preſervation, and promoting what its inſtinct leads it to: in this conſiſts the brute's felicity; it ſeems to be the meaſure of its underſtanding, from which it never ſwerves.

When man turns his eyes inwards upon himſelf, he ſees in himſelf the brute in great perfection; ſimilar calls to preſerve life, and to propagate the ſpecies, and ſimilar gratifications for obeying thoſe calls: but then he feels ſomewhat in himſelf more noble; ſomewhat that diſtinguiſhes him from all the reſt of the animal creation, that falls

falls within his knowledge: he is conſcious of reflexion; he can complicate ideas, and compare them together; he can diſcover the relations of things; he can perceive the beauty, the order, the harmony of the creation; he can, in the creatures, ſee the power, the wiſdom, and the goodneſs of the Creator; he finds in himſelf an inſatiable thirſt after ſomewhat that has no connexion with the body, after knowledge; a ſtrong deſire to contemplate, a diſpoſition to admire, and to imitate perfection; a natural propenſity to gratitude, and thankfulneſs for favours; and, when he carries his thoughts to the fountain of all wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, the Author of the creation, a fulneſs of heart that breaks out in gladneſs and adoration.

When man conſiders that he alone, of all the animal creation, has got eyes to ſee the beauty and excellency of the univerſe; that he alone has got an underſtanding to diſcover the perfection of the Creator in his works; that he alone has got a ſoul fitted to admire, to adore, and to rejoice in the goodneſs and perfection of his Maker; talents unneceſſary for preſerving his life, or propagating the ſpecies, but talents that qualify him for enjoying a much more permanent and exalted kind of felicity than the other animals ſeem capable of reliſhing: can he doubt that thoſe eyes, this underſtanding, and that diſpoſition of mind, was given him to fit him for ſeeing, admiring and adoring the fountain of all goodneſs and being? can he queſtion that the doing ſo is indiſpenſably his duty, as it would be his felicity? and can he imagine he anſwers the end of his creation, if, neglecting this care of thoſe talents, he give himſelf wholly up to purſue thoſe pleaſures that are common to him with the brutes?

The

The brutal appetites, and enjoyments are nicely proportioned to their ends, the preſervation and propagation of the animal: the appetites call regularly for what is neceſſary, and are fierce in proportion as the want is great; when the want is ſupplied, the deſire ceaſes; exceſs ſatiates, palls the appetite, and diſorders the machine.

It is not ſo with the mental purſuits, and pleaſures: the mind is abſolutely inſatiable; the more it knows, the keener it thirſts after knowledge; its deſires are endleſs, and the object infinite.

Beſides the power of thinking, man has the faculty of communicating by ſpeech, and recording his thoughts. The obſervation of each individual, and within the compaſs of a ſhort life, could not go very far in ſcience; but we are ſo made, that each may be helped by the diſcoveries of each other; the deſire of communicating knowledge is almoſt as ſtrong as the deſire to know; and, as the end of the capacity to know, is, manifeſtly, to diſcover the excellency of the Creator in his works, that the Man may be filled with admiration, and acknowledgment, it is impoſſible to doubt that the end of the faculty of ſpeech is to expreſs, and communicate to each other, what we ſeverally diſcover, to enlarge our ideas of the divine perfections, and to join in expreſſions of acknowledgment, and praiſe.

It is not ſo with the Brute; that is made to ſhew, and not to know, the excellency of the Creator.

One difference there is, highly remarkable, between the meer animal and the rational creature: nature produces, ſpontaneous, all that is neceſſary for the brute; whereas ſome art, beſides induſtry, is neceſſary to make what nature furniſhes uſeful, and comfortable, to man. The brute is clothed by Nature; the earth uncultivated produces the herb,

herb, the ſeed, the berry that is fit for its nutriment; raw-meat ſuits the ſtomach of the carnivorous, nor is there any occaſion for cookery, or dreſs. But it is otherwiſe with Man: tho' Nature furniſh abundantly the materials, yet ſkill, and induſtry, is neceſſary to fit them for his uſe. By much the greateſt part of the globe would be uninhabited, if induſtry did not furniſh clothing: grains muſt be raiſed; the juice of grapes and fruits muſt be fermented, and meat muſt be prepared for the ſtomach before Man can make uſe of it.

Becauſe Nature furniſhes abundantly for all the occaſions of the brute, they are each independent of the other, without connection, or ſociety; except in a few inſtances where inſtinct calls them to it, becauſe it is in thoſe inſtances neceſſary for the preſervation or propagation of the ſpecies.

But becauſe men have occaſion for the labour, the ſkill, the talents of each other, they are naturally ſocial, and dependent on each other; they are fitted to promote the intereſts of each other. The ſoul is ſo made, as to reap ſatisfaction from acts of beneficence, to feel concern from the ſufferings of its fellow-creatures, and to be knit in bonds of friendſhip and alliance with ſuch as entertain the ſame ſentiments.

Thus Nature has made men fit for ſociety, as it has made ſociety neceſſary for them; but the end of making ſociety neceſſary for men, leads to a further conſideration. No one can think that the infinitely wiſe, and powerful, could not have ſo framed men, that Nature, alone, and unaided, ſhould have ſupplied all their wants; but, if he had done ſo, ſolitude muſt have been the inclination of the rational creature, and no more of the perfection of the Creator would have been known, or celebrated, than what fell within the obſervation of each individual. But, as eſſential wiſdom has

has diſpoſed man neceſſarily for ſociety, has provided them with proper faculties to communicate to each other their obſervations and their ſentiments, and has furniſhed them with inclinations to make ſuch communications, and to join in acts of acknowledgment and praiſe; it cannot be doubted that the chief, the high, the honourable end of fitting men for ſociety, was to advance and propagate the knowledge of Nature, and of the Author of it, and to promote and perfect that exerciſe of the ſoul for which it was given to man.

When man ſurveys his own ſpecies, framed for the contemplation of the works of God; fitted for admiring and adoring the author and ſupporter; ſo contrived as to aid each other in that great deſign, and to contribute to one another's happineſs, not only in that, but in the common enjoyments of the animal life; he cannot help conſidering each individual as the immediate ſervant of the Creator; he cannot diſpenſe with obſerving the cloſe relation, and connexion, between the whole, and the neceſſary dependence each has on the other.

And, when he recollects what pleaſure reſults to the ſoul from conſciouſneſs of beneficent and merciful acts, what horror ariſes from the thoughts of cruelty and injuſtice, he muſt needs ſee his duty towards his fellow-ſervants, and with thankfulneſs acknowledge the goodneſs of the Creator, who has annexed immediate pleaſure to each act of duty, and joined horror to tranſgreſſion.

View then man in his perfect ſtate, as, from the ruins ſtill remaining, we certainly know he muſt have been, Bleſſed with all the enjoyments that give reliſh to the animal life; Diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the viſible creation, by that intelligent

ligent principle that enables him to ſee the infinite wiſdom, power, and goodneſs of the Author of nature in his works; Choſen to be a witneſs to the boundleſs perfections of the Eternal; Poſſeſſed of an inſatiable deſire of knowledge, and freſh diſcoveries pouring in upon him, without ceaſing; Qualified to admire, to praiſe, and to adore, and perpetual occaſions offering themſelves for thoſe rapturous exerciſes; Placed in ſociety, with companions fitted for the like enjoyments, and ſo made as to promote his felicity, under ties of duty to them, but duty the performance whereof was neceſſary to be rewarded with pleaſure; Conſcious of the favour of his infinitely powerful and beneficent Creator, and therefore bleſſed in the exerciſe of perpetual thankfulneſs: View man, I ſay, whether imagination can ſuggeſt to itſelf a ſtate of higher felicity, or conceive how man came by choice, and of his own free-will, to relinquiſh it?

Such was man! but view him in his preſent condition, and you ſee a creature ſtill poſſeſſed of all thoſe qualities that fitted him for ſeeing and enjoying the chief good, with ſupreme delight; but you ſee thoſe talents monſtrouſly and miſchievouſly employed: thoſe eyes, and that underſtanding, that were given to perceive with tranſport the perfections of the Creator in his works, are now no more employed in that glorious ſervice; the heart, and the deſire, that panted after, and rejoiced in the favour and protection of the fountain of goodneſs, have ceaſed to act upon that object; all the mental powers, all the ſprings of the heart, are ſtill at work in ſearch of felicity; but they ſeek for it where no real good is to be found, and contribute to the real miſery of unfortunate man. The ſovereign good neglected, all thoſe talents, that were given for diſcovering and enjoying it, are turned to the improvement of thoſe

thoſe pleaſures which man has in common with the brutes. The ſkill and induſtry of that intelligent creature, are occupied in purſuing the gratifications of the brutal appetites; and, in ſo doing, weaken and diſable even thoſe appetites from anſwering their real uſes; or are employed in finding, and laying up means for ſuch beaſtly gratifications. In the place of ſocial affection and benevolence to mankind, malice, envy, fraud, rapine, murder prevail; in the place of God, love chuſes Self for its object. Knowledge, if look'd after, is ſought to gratify a vain, an uſeleſs curioſity, but not to lead to the ſource of knowledge, and life; in ſhort, rebel to God, man ſets up the vileſt of his creatures in his room, and employs thoſe faculties that were given for the ſervice and enjoyment of the Eternal, in purſuits infinitely diſhonourable, and offenſive.

In this diſtreſſed, this frightful condition, human nature can hardly bear looking in upon itſelf: the crime, as well as the folly, is ſo monſtrous, that ſerious reflexion on it muſt ſour all the ſilly enjoyments that men amuſe themſelves with, and create apprehenſions which, without ſome foundation for hopes, would be abſolutely intolerable; and therefore mankind, to avoid reflexions ſo very diſagreeable, ſuffer the active principle, intended to lead to God, to carry them away from one brutiſh purſuit to another: if any beam of light darting in upon their ſoul, ſhould ſhew them their duty, they ſhut it out, becauſe it points out the forfeit; and, becauſe the amazing long-ſuffering and patience of the Deity, delays deſerved puniſhment, unhappy mortals are ready to harden themſelves into a belief that there is no God to be offended at their treaſon, or to flatter themſelves with hopes, that, as they live like brutes, they ſhall die like brutes, and, by ceaſing to be, eſcape vengeance.

Such

Such is the depraved ſtate of wretched mankind! and ſuch the perverſe turn of thoſe whoſe minds are ſo debauched with brutal pleaſures, as to like the beaſtly ſtate in which they are. But they, in whom the image of God is not altogether defaced, who entertain honourable notions of the ſupreme Goodneſs, who ſee with wonder the long-ſuffering and forbearance of the infinitely Juſt, and who cannot conceive, that Eſſential Juſtice could diſpenſe with vengeance for a moment, if ſome conſideration of infinite value did not interpoſe, are willing to entertain hopes that ſome ranſom may have been found for the offence of mankind, ſome expedient provided, by the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, for obliterating their crimes, and reſtoring them to the favour and protection of the Eternal; and to have thoſe hopes confirmed, and improved into a well-grounded and certain belief, is the chief object of their wiſhes, as it would be the only ſolid foundation of their happineſs.

Whoever has the fainteſt glimpſe of ſuch hopes, if he acts rationally will not ceaſe inquiring, with the utmoſt earneſtneſs and accuracy, till he diſcover whether there is any juſt foundation for them, or no; he will conſult nature, he will examine authorities, and will be equally ſolicitous not to admit inſufficient, as he will be not to reject ſufficient evidence.

In ſuch an inquiry, beginning with the natural light ſtill remaining unextinguiſhed, and carefully ſeparating what does, from what does not flow from it: examining the notions commonly received about the Deity, and comparing them with the dictates of reaſon, many propoſitions will appear demonſtratively true. For example:

1. That the Deity is infinitely powerful, good, and intelligent, is deducible from nature.

2. That

2. That the Deity is merciful, ſo as to pardon ſin, and to be reconcileable to ſinners, is not deducible from nature.

3. That the Deity is poſſeſſed of qualities like to thoſe in the ſoul of man, ſuch as love, anger, compaſſion, is not deducible from nature.

4. That there is a plurality of Perſons in the Deity is not deducible from nature.

5. That man's ſin, upon atonement, is to be pardoned, and he reconciled to the Deity, is not deducible from nature.

6. That the ſufferings of a man, to whom one of the perſons of the Deity was to be joined, was to be that atonement, is not deducible from nature.

7. That the effect of this atonement and reconcilement, was to give all mankind a right to approach, and rely on the protection and beneficence of a placated Deity, is not deducible from nature.

8. That the Deity, thus appeaſed, is delighted with prayers and praiſes, is not deducible from nature.

9. That there is a correſpondence between the ſouls of men and the Deity, is not deducible from nature.

10. That the prayers of men are acceptable to the Deity, heard, and anſwered, through the interceſſion of that perſon whoſe ſufferings atoned for ſin, is not deducible from nature.

If then theſe things concerning the Deity, and man's ſtate, are true, and of abſolute neceſſity to be known to man, for his comfort, and towards enabling him to perform any acceptable duty to his Creator, his knowledge muſt come by revelation, and that knowledge muſt be kept up by inſtitutions, or records.

1. That there is ſuch a thing as right and wrong, may, and muſt be known, without revelation.

2. That right muſt be attended with reward, and wrong with puniſhment, muſt be known without revelation.

3. That therefore there muſt be a future ſtate, for rewards and puniſhments, muſt be known without revelation.

4. That man is in a depraved ſtate, at enmity with the Deity, is known without revelation; and muſt have been known ſo ſoon as that ſtate of enmity began.

In this depraved ſtate, man, attentive to his own circumſtance, muſt have been in a condition infinitely wretched, the object of the juſt indignation of the Almighty here and hereafter; helpleſs, and hopeleſs, becauſe no defence againſt offended juſtice; and muſt have continued incapable of hope, or comfort, or attempting any means of placating, or obtaining the protection of the Deity, unleſs the mercy of God, and his acceptance of the atonement provided, had been revealed to him, with evidence of the authority of that revelation, ſo convincing as to gain abſolute belief. This, and nothing leſs, could render life tolerable.

1. We know certainly that all men are, and from the earlieſt ages have been, in a ſtate of enmity and corruption.

2. That men now have, and from the earlieſt times have had, comfort from a perſuaſion of mercy and forgiveneſs from God, contrary to reaſon, and the ſtrongeſt evidence which from thence can reſult.

3. That the whole world, from the earlieſt times, uſed nearly the ſame rites, ceremonies, and inſti-

tutions

tutions religious, for placating the Deity, averting wrath, procuring favour, returning thanks, by Sacrifices, Burnt-offerings, Blood; means that, in nature, have no ſort of connexion with the end propoſed, and therefore could not poſſibly have had their origin from reaſon, or natural light.

And, as this belief and theſe religious obſervances, prevailed over all mankind, without any ſupport from, but rather contrary to reaſon, it is a juſt concluſion, that the authority for ſuch belief, and ſuch obſervances, muſt have been exceeding high and ſtrong; and man cannot think of any ſufficient authority to have produced that univerſal faith, ſhort of divine revelation.

The doctrine of remiſſion of ſins, and expiation by blood, is till the ſecret is explained by revelation, ſo deſtitute of any foundation in reaſon, and apparently ſo contrary to it, that no *Reaſoner* could ever have thought of it; and, if he had, no one could have given credit to it, without ſome convincing proof for the authority of that doctrine, which, as has been ſaid, could not poſſibly have been from reaſon. The univerſal reception then of that doctrine, is a demonſtration, in its own kind, that it had a divine authority.

If the Deity had determined to pardon man, by and through an Interceſſor, and upon ſatisfaction, that would not have anſwered the end; unleſs man were acquainted with, and believed it, he would remain in the ſame gloomy ſtate of deſpair, without the leaſt glimpſe of hopes, or encouragement to pray, to praiſe, to love, to rejoice in the mercy and ſalvation of God; which would have left him a prey to his terrors and his luſts, and muſt have determined him to have ſhut out all thoughts of the Deity. For nothing could poſſibly determine man to hope, to pray, to praiſe, to

ſerve, to rejoice in the protection of the Deity, but a firm conviction and belief that God was placated, would forgive, and protect, and was pleaſed with ſervices.

If then it was the intention of God to pardon man, to reſtore him to a capacity of ſerving him, to reclaim him from his ſinful ſtate, to encourage him to love, fear and ſerve his Creator; it was abſolutely neceſſary, towards that deſign, to acquaint man with his intentions, to give ſuch proof of thoſe intentions as ſhould convince and thoroughly perſuade thoſe to whom the revelation was made, and to preſerve ſuch evidence of that revelation to mankind as ſhould be ſufficient to ſupport their faith and hope.

The loweſt degree of faith that can poſſibly be ſufficient to quiet the ſoul of man, and to reſtore him to a capacity of ſerving comfortably his God, and truſting to his favour and protection, is a firm conviction that God is placable, and will pardon upon repentance, and protect.

Whatever degree of evidence or revelation fixed this in man's mind, reſtored him quiet, and a poſſibility of endeavouring to gain the favour of God; and, ſuppoſing the belief abſolute, muſt determine the man ſo believing, to ſeek and ſerve God, to the beſt of his ability and underſtanding.

They to whom the merciful intentions of God have been the moſt fully revealed, and to whom the evidence of that revelation has the moſt diſtinctly appeared, are in a much happier condition, and have many more incentives and helps to piety and devotion, than thoſe who have juſt light enough to know that God is merciful, and to believe that he will pardon, upon repentance, and a hearty converſion of the deſire of the ſoul towards him. But, if the belief of the latter is total and abſolute it may change his heart, and his courſe of life,

life, and bring him within the favour and protection of his God. Hence faith, ſo much prized in the Old and New Teſtament, not that faith, as ſuch, is of value; but becauſe, where it truly is, it muſt produce a change of ſoul, and obedience. No man, who verily believes any fruit to be poiſon, will taſte it; and let any man who knowingly ſins, ſay what he will, he has not faith when he ſo acts.

As this belief is abſolutely neceſſary to all mankind, and muſt have been intended to reach them all, the evidence for inducing it, muſt be of that nature as to accomodate itſelf to all the ſpecies of men. There muſt be that ſort of evidence that leads the vulgar, the unthinking, the illiterate; and there muſt be alſo ſuch proof as ſhall determine the ingenious, the inquiſitive, the learned.

By much the greateſt part of mankind have no other evidence for this belief, than general received opinion; what has been held by their fathers, and all their acquaintance, paſſes for truth, and produces reſolutions and actions.

It is impoſſible to believe any thing more firmly than the vulgar do, that the earth ſtands ſtill, and that the ſun moves round: a belief as general, and as abſolute, of the facts revealed for the comfort and ſalvation of mankind, would produce a conduct very different from what we ſee.

Where the common opinions about the devil, witches, witchcraft, *&c.* prevail, the belief is tranſmitted to poſterity, and the children doubt as little as the fathers did.

If theſe things were true, and capable of a demonſtration, the vulgar would believe not becauſe of the demonſtration, which they have not leiſure, or learning, or capacity to enter into, but becauſe of the fixed opinions of others from whom they learn.

For, as they are not true, nay ſome of them demonſtratively falſe, the vulgar believe them,

becauſe they are not qualified to examine the demonſtration.

But, if there is not ſuch evidence as is fit to ſatisfy the learned and the inquiſitive, it cannot produce belief in them; and the vulgar opinion cannot be of long continuance, where the learned and the inquiſitive declare againſt it.

The evidence therefore attending revelation ought to be ſuch as was fit to create and continue a very firm and general belief, and opinion amongſt the groſs of mankind; and to conquer and anſwer the doubts and ſcruples of the inquiſitive and the learned.

That the firſt publication of the merciful intentions of God to men, and the declaration of ſo much as he thought fit to reveal concerning himſelf, and what was to be done and believed, was attended with ſufficient evidence to ſupport the authority of the revelation, cannot be doubted, becauſe the deſign was to gain belief.

And if, in every ſucceeding age, the ſame publication had been made, with the like evidence, there is no doubt we ſhall have no unbeliever.

But, in fact, we ſee it has not pleaſed God to repeat in this manner the evidence of his revelation.

Nor is the not repeating the evidence, to ſatisfy the curioſity of impertinent and preſumptuous objectors, who meaſure the conduct of the Deity by their own vain imaginations, any juſt cauſe of doubting the original revelation, if the proofs of that revelation are ſufficient to induce belief.

God could have prevented man's ſinning originally; he could have reſtored him abſolutely to his priſtine ſtate; and he could have continued ſtanding and perpetual obvious miracles, for confirming revelation: but he has done neither of theſe. And, though no other anſwer could be given

given to the queſtion, Why has he not? but that it has not ſuited his wiſe ſcheme, for the government of his Grace to man, it is beyond all doubt ſufficient.

If it was the ſcheme of the Deity

To create man perfect, with a capacity of retaining that perfection, or of falling from it, which we call liberty, without interpoſing farther, to determine him either to the one, or to the other;

To reſtore him to a capacity of regaining happineſs, by publiſhing means of ſalvation, with divine or ſupernatural evidence, and appointing the moſt feaſible means for continuing the belief of that revelation, without farther interpoſing, till the ill uſe of the free will, or liberty of man, made farther interpoſition neceſſary; and

To diſplay omnipotent power, or remarkable events, when the notable defection of mankind made it neceſſary, in order to confirm or reſtore the revelation, at that time, and to produce ſtill ſtronger and ſtronger evidence for it, to ſucceeding generations; who dare preſume to find fault with ſuch œconomy?

Who can tell what wiſe ends the Deity may have to anſwer by ſhewing, in the ſeveral ſtages of the world, and under the different degrees of light and information, what uſe the heart of man was to make of free-will, and of the mercy of God offered?

If it was the intention of the Deity, to reveal to man the method of Salvation; that a Saviour was to come in the fleſh, by his death and ſuffering to atone for ſin; and that the Saviour, having aboliſhed ſin by his ſufferings, was to become interceſſor for man, to reconcile him to the Deity, and produce communication between them; no doubt this might be, by convincing evidence, intimated

and publiſhed at firſt: and the queſtion is, What would be the moſt proper method for continuing to poſterity the belief of the truth ſo revealed?

It does not appear that, in the earlieſt times, writing by letters, or recording facts, any other way, than by emblematical or hierogliphical repreſentations, was known or in uſe.

And, if writing by letters had been in uſe, ſuch writing, to prove it of divine authority to ſucceeding generations, would require evidence.

Tradition ſurely was one way; but that without other help, not very certain, and liable to infinite miſtakes; as well as the authority of it, for that reaſon, liable to doubt.

But, if to Tradition were added certain conſtant, ritual, and emblematical obſervances, at fixed times, for ever to be continued and endure; then, in proportion as the emblems were expreſſive, and univerſally received, the memory and belief of the matter repreſented would remain diſtinct and ſtrong, and the end of recording be obtained.

Anniverſary, monthly, weekly days obſerved, preſerve freſh the memory of moſt events.

If therefore it was the command of God, that, to keep in mind the revelation that a Saviour, the firſt-born of a woman, ſhould die for the ſins of men, ſhould by his blood atone, and become interceſſor for mankind, Man ſhould kill a kid, or a lamb, ſhed its blood, ſprinkle the blood towards the ſame place which the Deity directed to be emblematical of the place of its reſidence, chuſing a perfect, unſpotted male, as the emblem of the ſuffering Saviour, and a perfect firſt-born amongſt men, as the emblem of the firſt-born, the Interceſſor; and, if this emblematical act was to be repeated once, or oftener, every year, on a ſtated day; once every moon, on the firſt day; once every week, on the ſeventh day; and twice every

every day, morning and evening; and if, on thoſe occaſions, men were in the emblems to ſee, with ſorrow, the repreſentation of the blood they forfeited, and, with joy, to entertain the hopes of mercy through that blood, which the blood of the beaſt ſacrificed repreſented; and to believe that God, on thoſe occaſions, was willing to hear their prayers, and receive their praiſes: the invention of man cannot deviſe any other method, ſo likely to preſerve and perpetuate the knowledge and believe of a revelation, ſo neceſſary to mankind.

Men, indeed, might err, after a courſe of generations, in the expoſition and application of thoſe emblems, and emblematical actions; and, when the true ſenſe and intention of them was varied, or in any degree loſt, imagination would ſuggeſt other, and different, nay even falſe meanings; but, ſo long as the obſervance remained, a belief of placating the Deity by blood muſt remain: which belief is, of all others, the moſt unreaſonable, except as it is explained by the original, and only true ſenſe and meaning, of the emblems and inſtitutions.

Thus, what was intended by the prieſt's interceſſory office, was loſt, though officiating by a prieſt remained; what was intended by the firſt-born's being to diſcharge the prieſtly office, was forgot, long before men ceaſed to look upon the right of prieſthood to be in the firſt-born; what was intended by ſacrificing *a perfect* MALE, was loſt, whilſt great accuracy was employed to take care that nothing but what was perfect ſhould be ſacrificed; nay, *ſuch* was the weakneſs of mankind, that they forgot the blood ſhed was *typical* and *emblematical* only, and imagined a real virtue in it; than which nothing could be more abſurd: but ſtill they continued with the greateſt zeal to

make uſe of ſacrifice, to believe it a means of atoning for ſins, of averting puniſhments, of procuring favours from the Deity; they thought Sacrifice made their prayers and praiſes acceptable, that there was ſomething ſacred in it, that it bound contracts and covenants of all kinds, and that the Deity expected and required ſacrifice of them, and would be highly offended if that ſervice was diſcontinued.

So that, notwithſtanding all the errors, wanderings, and falſe imaginations of mankind, they ſtill retained, by this EMBLEMATICAL INSTRUCTION, a ſtrong belief that the Deity was placable, and that ſins were forgiveable; which left it poſſible for them to hope, and to endeavour to gain the divine favour, and conſequently to love and ſerve the Deity. And the perpetual and univerſal uſe of ſacrifice, with particular rites, and under particular obſervances, after the original meaning and intention of them was loſt, is a proof, not only of their divine origin, but alſo of the reality of that ſacrifice which thoſe emblems were intended to repreſent.

The original and primary uſe of ſacrifice, and of all other religious inſtitutions, was commemorative of the original revelation, a ſort of daily MEMORIAL, or Record, of what God declared, and man believed and hoped. But as the declaration of God regarded a future event, every one, almoſt, of thoſe inſtitutions and emblematical ordinances, muſt be looked upon alſo as prophetick; which, when the event predicted happened, proves a demonſtration, much above what HUMANITY could invent, of the Divinity of the INSTITUTION, and of the certainty of the hopes and belief founded on that event.

Beſides the original intention of being commemorative and predictive, there was a very uſeful

ful design in the *annual*, *monthly*, *weekly* and *daily* Services, to give men frequent occasions of searching into themselves, as in the presence of the Deity; of confessing, worshipping, and adoring; and so reforming, and preserving their minds from folly. This, in time, they mistook for the chief end, forgetting the *chief end* almost entirely; and, at last, they greatly corrupted even the secondary design, imagining that there was merit in the sacrifice, as such; that the Deity loved sacrifice, and expected it, as a tribute that was due: though God never required sacrifice (it is in this sense the Scripture says so) for his own sake, as one may say, but instituted it for the sake of men, as a memorial to keep in mind what he had revealed. To this end was the frequency; as well as to give frequent opportunities of worship, the true service of the heart, and reflexion, which vain man almost entirely forgot.

As the antiquity and universality of sacrifice, notwithstanding the various corruptions, with which, by the imaginations of men, it was infected, is a proof of its divine original; so is the ridiculous POLYTHEISM of antiquity, evidence, in some degree, of a *plurality of* PERSONS in the Deity; as the opinion, in all appearance, must have flowed from some revelation, or institution, for preserving the memory and knowledge of that revelation.

Nothing is more remote from any foundation in reason, than the doctrine of the TRINITY; and therefore it is a fair conclusion, that it must be owing to REVELATION, real or supposed.

As inconsistent as the TRINITY seems to be with reason, *Polytheism* is no less so; all nature speaks for ONE Deity, and even the doctrine of the TRINITY supposes it.

And

And yet in almoſt all the antient nations we find *Polytheiſm* eſtabliſhed; they had a plural to the noun GOD: nay, the eldeſt of all languages, the *Hebrew*, uſes always the plural noun ELOHIM, when ſpeaking of the Deity, frequently joined with plural verbs; though the Scripture, the only book extant in that language, takes care to let us know that this plural ELOHIM is but one Deity.

Now, as the knowledge of the TRINITY, if true, muſt be had by REVELATION, and not by REASON: if the Deity was pleaſed to diſcloſe ſo much of ITS own nature to mankind, IT muſt do it by referring to ideas taken from natural things; and, if the knowledge of that diſcovery was to be recorded, whilſt *hieroglyphical* or *emblematical* was the only WRITING, there muſt be a conjunction of *three Emblems* in *one*, to repreſent what was intended. Such conjunctions, by *Egyptian* and other monuments yet extant, appear to have been very frequent in earlier times, and very probably owed their origin to the *lawful emblems* firſt propoſed by the Deity; and the word in the *Hebrew* uſed to ſignify the IMAGE or Repreſentation of the Deity, carried about as an IDOL, is plural alſo, [TERAPHIM], though relating only to one *image* or *idol*.

The imagination of man, however, as in the caſe of ſacrifice, dropping the only rational thing, the UNITY, made uſe of the plurality of perſons in the one Deity, to coin a plurality of Deities; and, by retaining that notion againſt all reaſon, gives ground to conclude that it muſt have flowed from ſome very high, though miſtaken original, and to inquire what the fountain of ſo extraordinary an opinion may have been.

As the *imagination* of man, proceeding from one miſtake to another, muſt, at laſt, have obliterated

terated the knowledge of all REVELATION, notwithſtanding the wiſeſt precaution to preſerve it; it behoved the Deity, perſiſting ſtedfaſt in the purpoſe of mercy to mankind, to renew that REVELATION from time to time, and to rectify abuſes, with ſuch authority, for the renewal and rectification, as was ſufficient evidence of the truth of what was *revealed*; and, if that merciful and perfect Being was to ſhut up all REVELATION, and to ceaſe from farther interpoſition by extraordinary appearances amongſt men, it behoved him to make the REVELATION ſo compleat, and to leave it ſo fixed and unalterable, and attended with ſuch evidence for the truth of it, as ſhould leave no further room for error or doubt, amongſt thoſe who, with reſpectful hearts to the Deity, ſought after the truth.

Though it is extremely obvious, that ſuch a REVELATION and RECTIFICATION muſt have been; yet, ſeek for it amongſt all the monuments, the wiſdom, the records of the Heathen world, and you ſhall ſeek in vain; nothing but vanity and madneſs. The wiſeſt of them, at leaſt of thoſe that have come to our hands, ſeem to have known little of MAN's *fallen, deſperate ſtate*; and, when they turned their thoughts to Religion, appear to have known nothing further than a parcel of the lies and forgeries of their Prieſts.

So that, if any of the antient Heathens wrote before their REVELATION was totally corrupted, it is loſt; having been neglected by their ſucceſſors, who did not underſtand what it meant.

But, in looking over mankind, as they are at this day, we find a NATION in very particular circumſtances, Diſtinguiſhed from all the People that are, or perhaps ever were upon the face of the earth; the CHILDREN, as they believe, of one Man; Profeſſing a Religion different from that

that of all the Nations that now are ſcattered up and down the whole earth; Without dominion, power, or property any where; Tenacious, to death, of their own Religion and Opinions; for that reaſon deſpiſed, hated, oppreſſed, and perſecuted; and yet, ſubſiſting in ſo prodigious numbers, that, were they to be brought together, they would prove a mighty People.

Examining the hiſtory of this People, (I mean the *Jews*), we find they were very Powerful about 2000 years ago; poſſeſſed of a country, their own, and called by their own Name; in the full Exerciſe of a Religion, with Ceremonies, and Services peculiar to themſelves; in a firm Belief, derived from their *holy Books*, which they held to be REVELATION, that ſome very extraordinary *Perſon*, of their blood and kindred, ſhould then ariſe, who ſhould deliver them from all their Enemies, and ſet up a Kingdom above all the Kingdoms of the earth.

We find ſome time after, that, encouraged by this opinion, they quarrelled with the *Romans*; and, after the moſt obſtinate defence that ever people made, were utterly overthrown, their City and Temple deſtroyed, and thoſe that eſcaped the ſword, ſcattered up and down over the face of the earth.

We find that the particularity of their Faith and Service, the diſtinction that ſubſiſted between them and other Nations, and the ſeditiouſneſs and mutiny of their Deportment, founded on the perſuaſion of a great DELIVERER to come, brought total diſſipation upon them; ſo that they became every where the object of ſevere laws and ill uſage.

And we find, nevertheleſs, that for near 1700 years they have remained, under all theſe diſtreſſes and difficulties, a *People* diſtinct from thoſe they

they live amongſt, tenacious of their own Religion and Obſervances, not to be bribed or frightened from them, and fully convinced their Religion is immediately from God, and that the great DELIVERER, for them, is ſtill to come.

A Circumſtance ſo very ſingular calls for extraordinary attention. Of the many Nations and Kindreds famous for Proweſs, for Laws, for religious Opinions, is there any that remained, that preſerved their Name after a Conqueſt? Did not all mix and blend themſelves with the Conqueror? Of all the Religions that ever have been, did any ſtick ſo cloſe to the profeſſion of it, that, for a ſeries of Ages, they did not forſake it for the Religion of the Country they became ſubjects of; that infamy and oppreſſion could not drive them from it, but rather riveted them the ſtronger in it?

And this is ſtill the more amazing, that the Religion they hold, is of all others the moſt abſurd, as they underſtand it; and that the hopes they entertain are, undoubtedly, chimerical and falſe.

Inquire of this People, and you ſhall find their Faith is founded on a *Book*, which contains their LAW, ſaid to have come immediately from God, the HISTORY of this Nation, and certain HYMNS, and PROPHECIES, all which they firmly believe to have been written by Divine Inſpiration, and to contain the WILL, and WORD of God.

This *Book* they entertain with the higheſt eſteem, and preſerve with ſuch ſcrupulous exactneſs, that there are in the *Copies* of it fewer various readings than in any other Book extant; that they have never ſuffered a various reading, how true ſoever, to enter into the text; and that, as fond as they are of their method of *Pointing*, for varying the ſound, and thereby the ſenſe in ſome degree, of the

the *Hebrew* words, they have never dared to add those *Points* to the *Copies* of their LAW read in their Synagogues, believing that such an addition would be a profanation.

That this *Book* is not fictitious, nor in any part forged to gratify the vanity of the *Jews*, but, when first given to them, came with authority sufficient to enforce the reception of it, will appear to those who look into it, from this observation; that throughout, the *Jews* are described as the vilest, the wickedest of all men; they are severely reproved for their faults; DESTRUCTION is threatened; nay it is, formally, and over and over again, predicted, that they shall be *confounded*; that they shall be *dark*, and *blind*; that the *Book* which they keep, shall be *sealed up* from them; that they *shall not understand*, and therefore shall be *rejected*; and the *Nations*, at large, taken to be the *People* of God, in their room.

Receiving the *Book* originally, with such a sting in it, shews the authority was high; preserving it entire, without striking out or altering such passages, proves the *Book* was held sacred: Not to mention, here, the argument arising for the authority of the *Book*, from the exact completion of the Predictions.

The first cursory view of this *Book* must fill any man, who has looked into all the *Remains* of the antient Learning, Philosophy, and Religion of the *Nations*, with a strong prepossession in its favour. Amongst all these, nothing but folly and impertinence is to be met with; no tolerable Idea of the Deity; none of the Duty of Man, from the true motive; none at all of the chief and peculiar Felicity of the human race, in the enjoyment of the favour of God.

But in this *Book*, from one end to the other, the Praises of God, described as *One*, *Spiritual*, *Infinite*,

Infinite, *Eternal*, *Merciful*, *Gracious*, *Long-Suffering*, *Juſt*, *Powerful*, in ſhort, *infinitely Perfect*, are every where to be met with. The Duty of Man is placed where it ought to be; and the Felicity of man is deſcribed to conſiſt in the enjoyment of the favour of the Deity, to be obtained by conforming to the Will of God, and yielding him the heart. This is the language, the ſpirit of the whole; nothing contradictory to this, whatever vain men may fancy to the contrary, from ſome ill-underſtood paſſages.

This Reflexion will not be ſo prevailing with the unlearned; who, in the moſt common books ſince the *Chriſtian Æra*, meet with the moſt juſt, and at the ſame time the moſt noble and ſublime ideas; which are all, tho' they do not know ſo much, taken from the *Jews* ſacred *Book*: but it will be very cogent with thoſe that have read all the *Remains* of the *Heathen* world, prior to Chriſtianity; and who alone can make the compariſon, and ſee the peculiarity of the character of this *Book*, as it differs from all others, the productions of men.

This *Book*, taken all together, ſeems intended to promote Religious reſpect and ſervice to the Deity, and to raiſe ſtrong hopes and confidence of mercy and felicity.

It contains a compleat ſyſtem of SACRIFICATURE, with all the rites and religious obſervances thereto belonging, ſaid to be delivered to the Children of *Iſrael* by the Deity, in the moſt ſolemn manner, by the hands of *Moſes*.

This Syſtem, which is called the LAW, or the DIRECTORY, is ſaid to have been publiſhed by the Deity, in a manner attended with great ſigns and wonders, in the preſence of all the people, as to ſome part of it; and, as to the reſt, by *Moſes*, to whoſe

whoſe authority God, by very ſurpriſing miracles, gave credit.

This LAW is ſaid to have been reduced into *Writing* by *Moſes*, at the command of God, to be for ever preſerved, and obſerved; with promiſes of perpetual felicity, in caſe of obſerving, and threats of BLINDNESS and DESTRUCTION, to the whole nation, in caſe of not obſerving it.

This LAW was given to the Children of *Iſrael*, the Iſſue of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*; to each of whom it was promiſed, that out of their ſeed ſhould ariſe *That* which ſhould bleſs the whole earth. This people is ſaid to have been, by the immediate providence of God, kept diſtinct from all other nations, till the LAW was directly given to them; and then, by the very tenor and tendency of that LAW, was to remain diſtinct from all other people, ſo long as their nation ſubſiſted.

By the ſcheme of this INSTITUTION it appears, That the people were to be under the immediate government of the Deity; to poſſeſs a fruitful land, in the middle of the then beſt peopled part of the earth; that God was to be in a particular manner preſent with them, to be conſulted with, in a ſacred place, (firſt in the *Tabernacle*, and then in the *Temple*), by ſacred rites, and to give deciſions, and directions; and that, from time to time, he was to raiſe up Prophets to admoniſh, rebuke, and direct.

Beſides the Writings aſcribed to *Moſes*, called the LAW, the *Book* contains the HISTORY of the Nation from *Moſes*'s time to their firſt *Captivity*, for their defection from God, predicted firſt in the Law, and afterwards by ſucceeding Prophets.

It contains the writings and predictions of ſeveral Prophets, and the PSALMS, or religious HYMNS of the Nation, employed in the Divine Service, and

and compoſed by inſpired men, for the uſe of the people.

In theſe HYMNS, and other writings, a ſyſtem of the faith and hope of the enlightened *Jews* is to be met with; the true meaning and uſe of EMBLEMS, SYMBOLS and TYPES is explained; errors in practice and opinion are reproved; the expectation of mercy and ſalvation by a Divine Perſon is raiſed; that Perſon is, under various repreſentations, deſcribed; the change of the, then, preſent INSTITUTION for a better is intimated; the BLINDNESS, and total defection, and deſtruction of the *Jews*, with their *State* and *Temple*, is predicted; the CALLING into their room the *Gentiles* is foretold; and the time, for that great event, limited and deſcribed with characters and marks that cannot be miſtaken.

If the *Book*, then, that contains all theſe things, be Divine, it is plain that God did not leave Man without farther aſſiſtance to aid and induce his faith, after promulgation of Peace, but that he renewed the *glad* TIDINGS; as, from the nature of the thing, ought to have been done.

And, if it ſhall appear to be true, that the manner in which he renewed that Revelation has furniſhed a demonſtrative, permanent evidence, which never needs to be renewed, of his grace and favour to loſt Man, it calls for belief, and the higheſt acknowledgment of his mercy and wiſdom.

If the hiſtory of *Moſes*, his miracles, his communication with the Deity, is true, there is no poſſibility to call in queſtion the truth of what he delivers.

As the LAW, and INSTITUTION founded by *Moſes*, was to eſtabliſh Religion, and to make Mercy and Peace known to the whole earth, the Writings aſcribed to him begin with the CREATION,

TION, and carry down a general account of the concerns of mankind, till the Election of *Abraham* and his Seed.

The thing *Moſes* begins with, is the CREATION *of the* HEAVENS *and the* EARTH by the Deity; which, tho' true to the conviction of all mankind, no antient *Wiſe-man* ever found out. Here is no ridiculous *Theogonia*, no eternal *Chaos*, no fortuitous concourſe of Atoms; but a fair and a true declaration, *In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.*

He further takes notice of the Inſtitution of the *Sabbath*; which, though the Antients obſerved, they knew not the reaſon, or occaſion of.

The declaration of this undiſcovered truth, gives ſtrong prepoſſeſſion in favour of the reſt.

The next important thing is, that Man fell from a ſtate of innocence. This, as has been ſaid, every living man muſt find to be true, upon examination; and yet none of the *Wiſe*, whoſe works have come to us, ever thought of it: nothing more certain, nothing more important to be attended to; nothing leſs known: but this, *Moſes* diſtinctly relates as the cauſe, or at leaſt the occaſion, of every thing that followed.

The third thing he marks is, the confuſion, and deſperate ſtate, in which man was, upon the FALL; aſhamed of his fault, without hope in the mercy of God, and therefore ſtudious to hide himſelf from him. This, the FALL being true, muſt neceſſarily be true too; and therefore we readily believe *Moſes*.

The fourth thing he relates is, that God revealed his purpoſe of mercy to Mankind, and thereby delivered them from dread, deſpair, and confuſion. The words in which *Moſes* relates the promiſe of mercy, are, That *the Seed of the Woman*

ſhould

ſhould bruiſe the head of the Serpent, and *the Seed of the Serpent ſhould bruiſe his heel.*

Theſe words, which are all that is ſaid, do not, it is true, ſay that this *Seed of the Woman* ſhould be ſacrificed; though *bruiſing the heel* looks mighty like the ſuffering of the lower and leaſt noble part of that *Seed*; nor do they ſay that ſacrifice, and the other obſervances of the LAW, were then inſtituted: but it appears plainly, that, ſoon after, *Cain* and *Abel* offered, and that at a ſtated or appointed time; it appears *Noah* ſacrificed, and that, in his days, Man was commanded to abſtain from eating BLOOD, as a thing ſacred; it appears the *Patriarchs* did ſo, without any precedent, inſtitution, or commandment, recorded, and that their Sacrifices were reſpected by the Deity; and it appears that all the nations of the Earth, who ſprung from the *firſt* PARENTS, practiſed ſacrifice, with nearly the ſame rites: Wherefore, it may fairly be concluded, that Sacrifice, and the rites thereto belonging, were inſtituted upon the firſt promulgation of the EVANGELIUM, the tidings of mercy, and from that inſtitution were tranſmitted to all mankind; and it would imply an abſurdity to ſuppoſe, that this EMBLEMATICAL, COMMEMORATIVE obſervance was inſtituted without man's knowing the reaſon and meaning of it.

We know by Hiſtory, without the help of *Moſes*, that all Mankind ſacrificed in hopes of mercy; from Reaſon we diſcover, that thoſe hopes muſt have been founded on REVELATION, and that Sacrifice (which of itſelf could ſignify nothing) muſt have been no more than a memorial, by inſtitution: and now from *Moſes* we learn, that thoſe hopes were actually founded on explicit Revelation by the God of Nature; and that Sacrifice, which the ſame God ſays in itſelf ſignifies nothing, was practiſed, juſt after, by the favourites of the Deity,

Deity, and acceptable to him; and that he gave a new model of that Inſtitution, correcting abuſes, in the wilderneſs.

We learn, next, from *Moſes*, that God was pleaſed at different times to appear to, and converſe with Men, *Adam*, *Enoch*, *Noah*; and that, nevertheleſs, men corrupted themſelves ſo monſtrouſly, an early inſtance whereof is *Cain*'s killing his brother *Abel*, that the Deity brought on a FLOOD, which deſtroyed the whole earth, and with it all men, except *Noah* and his family.

This FLOOD all antient nations have confuſed tradition about; and though *Exuviæ*, ſtill remaining near the ſurface of the Earth, give very ſtrong evidence of it, yet there is no ſenſible account of it, from the *Antients*; which ſtrongly raiſes the credit and authority of *Moſes*'s Writings.

By the direction to take into the ARK a greater number of *clean* than of *unclean* beaſts, and by *Noah*'s practice, immediately after the FLOOD, of ſacrificing of every *clean* beaſt and bird, it is evident the diſtinction of *clean* and *unclean* does not depend originally on the LAW of *Moſes*, but has its origin before the FLOOD, probably at the firſt publication of *Grace* to *Adam*.

As the FLOOD deſtroyed all the corrupted, and to *Noah* and his family was demonſtration of the power of, and obedience due to, the Deity, this great event was a total Extirpation of all falſe Religion; and, humanly ſpeaking, it was to be hoped the faith and religious ſervice of men would have continued long pure.

But that was not the caſe: for, as *Adam*'s ſon *Cain* ſinned early, ſo did *Noah*'s ſon *Ham*; he merited to be pronounced accurſed of his father, ſoon after the deliverance from the FLOOD. And, before the memory of that dreadful judgment was loſt, men meditated the ſetting up a falſe Religion and

and Service to the *Heavens* at *Babel*; which the Deity diſappointed, by *confounding* and dividing their IMAGINATIONS, ſo that they ſeparated and diſperſed at that time.

As *Moſes* relates the deſtruction of the *Antediluvian* world by the FLOOD, ſo he gives an account of repeopling the earth by the three ſons of *Noah*, giving a brief abſtract of the Deſcent of the families from theſe three ſons: and it is extremely remarkable, and ſtrongly confirms the truth of *Moſes*'s hiſtory, that, from the moſt accurate and judicious inquiry into the *prophane* records and monuments extant, it does appear the world has been repeopled in the manner which *Moſes* deſcribes, and nearly about the ſame time, counting backwards from known *periods*, by the juſteſt rules.

After the account given of the irreligious attempt at *Babel*, of the deſcent of mankind from *Noah*'s ſons, and of the peopling of the earth, *Moſes* begins the hiſtory of the *Jewiſh* Nation, deſcended from *Abraham*, who was ſprung of *Sem*. This hiſtory, as to certain events, is very particular: It deſcribes *Abraham* as called, immediately by God, away from a family and land that had begun to corrupt itſelf, to enter into a formal covenant with God: It deſcribes the promiſe of the land of *Canaan* to *Abraham*, and to his ſeed, which is expreſſed in very extraordinary terms: It deſcribes the ſame promiſe repeated to *Iſaac*, and to *Jacob*: It relates the Inſtitution of CIRCUMCISION, (which, if inſtituted before, ſeems to have been left off,) to be obſerved by the whole race of *Abraham*: It relates the manner of the Children of *Iſrael*'s going into *Egypt*, their bitter ſervitude there, and their ſeparation from the *Egyptians*: It records their miraculous deliverance by the hand of *Moſes*: It relates their long ſojourning in the wilderneſs, and their progreſs toward the land promiſed:

miſed: It relates the miraculous and ſurpriſing manner of the promulgation of the LAW by the Deity, with extraordinary ſigns and wonders. It records all the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Sacrificature*, and of the whole religious ſervice of the *Jewiſh* Church: It records the Conſtitution of the *Jewiſh* civil government, which, as well as the religious, had God for its head: It deſcribes the Tabernacle, the reſidence of the ſupreme Governor, till the Temple ſhould be built: It records the promiſe of the *Advent* of another *Prophet*, like unto *Moſes*, who was to be heard: it relates a formal cutting off the *Type* of the predicted PURIFIER, or the renewal thereof, and the Terms upon which the People ſhould partake of the benefit of that PURIFICATION, commonly tranſlated a COVENANT *between God and the People*; wherein ſtrict obedience is promiſed on the part of the people, and, on that condition, great and perpetual bleſſings promiſed on the part of God; but a manifeſt prediction is, at the ſame time, made of the people's defection, and of their future deſtruction.

And the end of all this ſurpriſing diſpoſition, and œconomy, manifeſtly is to record, with great accuracy, the LAW with its ſeveral RITES and CEREMONIES, and to recommend the exact obſervance of it; to the end it never ſhould be loſt, or fall out of the view and knowledge of Mankind; but the particulars of it, and the Authority by which it was promulgated, ſhould remain atteſted, to future generations, by better and ſtronger evidence than any other matter of fact ever was amongſt men.

And, if the giving this LAW, and the ſelecting and conſtituting this *people* to be the depoſitaries of it, in this manner, was the immediate act of God, it muſt certainly be of infinite conſequence to have had that LAW ſo recorded, and preſerved; and

and yet, if you look only at the obvious and outside appearance of that LAW, it was of little or no use, and the observance of it has ceased many hundred years ago, and is now, without a miracle, become impracticable; whereas, viewing it in the light already hinted, it becomes the evidence of all hope and faith.

The evidence the *Jews* had to believe the several matters related by *Moses*, preceding the deliverance from *Egypt*, was, so far as we know, no more than *Moses*'s word; whose credit was sufficiently established, by the testimonies given to him by the Deity; but, at the same time, it is not certain that they had not some distinct tradition concerning these things.

But, as to his authority, and the authority of the Laws and Institutions given by him, they had; and their children, and we who take it from their children, have the strongest evidence the nature of the thing is capable of. For,

1*st*, The whole People, an infinite multitude, were witnesses of all the miracles wrought preceding the deliverance from *Egypt*, and of the final miracles that atchieved their deliverance; in memory whereof, the PASSOVER, an annual solemnity, was instituted, with the strongest injunctions, to acquaint their children with the cause of that observance, and *to mark that night throughout all their generations for ever*.

2*dly*, The whole People were witnesses to the miracle in passing the *Red Sea*, and sung that hymn which *Moses* composed on that occasion, which was preserved for the use of their children.

3*dly*, The whole People were witnesses to the dreadful Promulgation of the LAW from *Sinai*, with which they were also to acquaint their children; and the feast of PENTECOST was annually

to be obſerved on the day on which that Law was given; beſides that the very *Tables* in which the *ten* COMMANDS were written, were depoſited in the Ark, and remained, at leaſt, till the building of *Solomon*'s Temple, and probably till the deſtruction of it.

4*thly*, The whole People were witneſſes to the many miracles wrought, during the ſpace of forty years, in the wilderneſs; to the *Pillar of* FIRE *and* CLOUD, to the MANNA, QUAILS, &c. a ſample of the MANNA remained to future generations; and they were directed to relate what they ſaw to their children.

5*thly*, The whole People were witneſſes to the framing and building of the Ark, and Tabernacle; they were all contributers to it; they ſaw the CLOUD fill, and reſt upon it, and they aſſiſted at the Services performed there; and, to commemorate this, as well as their ſojourning in tents in the wilderneſs, the annual *Feaſt of* TABERNACLES was appointed, which, in ſucceeding years, they were to explain to their children.

As theſe things were abſolutely ſufficient to ſatisfy the children of *Iſrael*, then in being, touching the authority and obligation of this LAW, ſeveral things were added to enforce the obſervance, and to preſerve the memory and evidence of what was to be obſerved.

1*ſt*, The LAW was by *Moſes*, at the command of God, put into *Writing*, for the greater certainty, as well as all the directions for making the ARK, the CHERUBIM, the TABERNACLE, the *Prieſts* GARMENTS, &c. and all the Rules of GOVERNMENT, JUDICATURE, &c. with every other circumſtance revealed, for directing the faith and the conduct of the Nation.

2*dly*,

2*dly*, This LAW was to be preſerved, peruſed, and attended to, in the moſt careful manner; The *Prieſts*, who were to judge in queſtions relating to it, muſt be well verſed in it; The *King*, who was to rule over the Nation, was to write out a *Copy* of it for himſelf, and to peruſe it continually; And the *People* were to write out paſſages of it, and to wear them, by way of *Signs*, upon their Hands, and of *Frontlets*, between their Eyes, and to *write them upon the poſts of their doors*, &c. And they were to teach their children the moſt notable parts of it, and particularly to inſtruct them in the miracles attending the deliverance from *Egypt*, *as they ſat in their houſe*, *as they walked by the way*, *as they lay down*, *and as they roſe up*, &c.

3*dly*, Beſides the authority that promulgated the LAW, there was a ſolemn COVENANT and Agreement between God and the people, whereby the people became bound to keep, preſerve, and obſerve this LAW, and all that was contained in it; and God became bound to be the God of the *Iſraelitiſh* People, to protect, and proſper them: and this COVENANT, towards the end of their ſojourning in the wilderneſs, was ſolemnly renewed.

4*thly*, The particulars of this COVENANT, upon God's part, were, to give the people *the good land of* Canaan, *a land flowing with milk and honey*; to preſerve and protect them in it; to give them perpetual indurance, and victory over their and his enemies; to proſper them in all their labours; to give them the increaſe of their fields, and flocks; and to make them a great, a happy, and a flouriſhing people; on condition that they kept and obeyed his Law.

5*thly*, The particulars, on the part of the People, were, to ſerve *Jehovah*, and no other God, in the way directed by the LAW; to preſerve, obſerve, and obey the LAW carefully and exactly;

and, if they failed or tranſgreſſed, to ſubmit and conſent to the ſevere ſanction of the LAW and COVENANT, which, in many inſtances, was, to individuals tranſgreſſing, death, [*to be cut off from the people*], and to the bulk of the People, DESTRUCTION, CAPTIVITY, DISPERSION, BLINDNESS, MADNESS, *&c.* beſides the forfeiture of all the good promiſes.

6*thly*, Beſides the other bleſſings, and pre-eminences, God was, by ſome ſpecial viſible Symbol of his preſence, to reſide continually with the people; firſt, in the Tabernacle, which was made in the wilderneſs for that end, and, afterwards, in the Temple; whence he was to give judgment and directions, and to anſwer prayers, and accept of vows.

7*thly*, This COVENANT was alſo reduced into writing, and was the tenure by which the *Iſraelites* held the land of *Canaan*, and on which all their hopes were founded: wherefore it muſt in all generations be conſidered by them as a thing of no ſmall moment.

As God was the head of this STATE, and as the people held immediately their land of him; ſo he made ſeveral Regulations for holding that property, that are very remarkable.

1*ſt*, The Land was by his command divided into twelve lots, one for each *Tribe*; and they were put in poſſeſſion accordingly, to the excluſion of the tribe of *Levi*, who for their portion had no more than what attended the ſervice of God's houſe, and ſome Cities, with Suburbs, diſperſed amongſt other Tribes.

2*dly*, Not only were the deſcendents of each Tribe to enjoy, in excluſion of other Tribes, their own lot, but the particular fields and parcels, within

within each Tribe, were to remain for ever with the reſpective families that firſt poſſeſſed them, and, on failure of the Iſſue of the Poſſeſſor, to the neareſt of that family: Hence, all lands ſold returned at the *Jubilee* to the Proprietor, or his neareſt a-kin; he who had right *to avenge blood*, might redeem.

3*dly*, This right of *Blood*, depending upon knowledge of deſcent and genealogy, made it abſolutely neceſſary for the children of *Iſrael* to keep very exact records and proofs of their deſcent; not to mention the expectation they had of ſomething, ſurpriſingly ſingular, from the many promiſes made to *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, that the BLESSING to mankind ſhould ſpring from their ſeed; and, in tracing their genealogy, we ſee they were very critical, upon their return from *Babylon*: ſo that, before their Records were diſturbed by the Captivity, it could not well be otherwiſe, but that every body of any note amongſt the *Jews* could tell you the name of his Anceſtor, who firſt had the Family-poſſeſſion, in the days of *Joſhua*, and how many degrees, and by what deſcent, he was removed from him. And as theſe firſt Poſſeſſors, purſuant to the cuſtom of the Nation, muſt have been deſcribed by their fathers name, 'tis highly probable, they could have quoted by name that Anceſtor who ſaw the miracles in *Egypt*, who ſaw the LAW given, who entered into the COVENANT, and who contributed to the ſetting up the ARK and TABERNACLE.

4*thly*, The very ſurpriſing care taken by the Deity to keep the breed of the *Jews* pure, and genuine, by the proofs of VIRGINITY, and by the miraculous *Waters of* JEALOUSY, is a circumſtance that merits attention, and will eaſily induce a belief that Deſcent and Birth was a matter much minded amongſt them. And,

5*thly*, The appointment and obſervance of the *Sabbatical* year, and, after the ſeventh *Sabbatical* year, a year of JUBILEE, for the general releaſe of debts, lands, &c. is a circumſtance of great moment, not only as theſe notable PERIODS were uſeful towards the eaſy computation of time, but as it made inquiry into TITLES, and conſequently genealogy, neceſſary every fiftieth year; and as the ceſſation from culture, every ſeventh year, gave continual occaſions for the Deity's diſplaying his power in increaſing the Crop of the ſixth, purſuant to his promiſe.

Now, taking theſe circumſtances together under conſideration, could any human precaution have provided more means to keep up the memory and evidence of any fact? Could this have been done by human foreſight or force? Has any thing like to it ever been in the world beſides?

What could tend more to perpetuate the memory of any event, than to deliver a whole People, by publick glorious miracles, from intolerable ſlavery? To publiſh a very extraordinary ſyſtem of Laws immediately from heaven? To put this Law in writing, together with the Covenant for the obeying it? To make the tenure of the poſſeſſions of the felicity of that people depend on the obſervance of this Law? To appoint annual ſolemnities for keeping the LAW, and the giving of it, in mind? To appoint *ſigns* for the hands, and *frontlets* for the face, by way of MEMORANDUMS? To injoin perpetual private inſtruction by the parent to the children? To make the tenure of the Eſtates depend on the original diviſion of the Land, to men who ſaw the miracles, and firſt took poſſeſſion, and on the proximity of relation, by deſcent, to them? To appoint a return of Lands every fiftieth year, which ſhould give perpetual occaſion

occaſion to canvaſs thoſe deſcents? To order a *Sabbath* every ſeventh year for the Land, the loſs of which ſhould be ſupplied by the preceding year's increaſe? And to ſelect a whole tribe, conſiſting of many thouſands, to be the Guardians, in ſome degree the Judges and the Executors, of this LAW; who were barred from any portion of the land, in common with their brethren, and were contented with the contributions that came from the other tribes, without any fixed portion amongſt them? This muſt keep up the belief and authority of that LAW amongſt the deſcendents of that *People*, or nothing could: and if ſuch a belief, under all theſe circumſtances, prevailed amongſt a people ſo conſtituted, that belief could not poſſibly proceed from impoſture; becauſe the very means provided, for proof of the truth, are ſo many checks againſt any poſſibility of impoſition.

If any man will ſuggeſt, that the LAW of the *Jews* is no more than human invention, and that the *Book of the* LAW is a forgery; let him ſay when it was impoſed upon that *People*, or at what PERIOD it poſſibly could have been impoſed upon them, ſo as to gain belief, later than the PERIOD they mention, and under other circumſtances than thoſe they relate.

Could the whole People have been perſuaded, at any one PERIOD, by any Impoſtor, that they were told ſeverally by their fathers, and they by theirs, that the LAW was given with ſuch circumſtances, and under ſuch promiſes, and threats, if they were not really told ſo; or that they, throughout all their generations, had worn certain paſſages of the LAW by way of FRONTLETS and SIGNS, if it had not really been ſo?

Could the whole People have been perſuaded to ſubmit to the pain of death, upon all the offences the LAW makes capital, unleſs their fathers had

done ſo, upon evidence of the authority of that LAW?

Could the whole People have been perſuaded that they had kept exact Genealogies, in order to intitle them to the bleſſing, and to their inheritances ſeverally, unleſs they actually had done ſo?

Could the whole People believe that they had kept PASSOVERS, *Feaſts of* TABERNACLES, &c. down from the date of the LAW, commemorative of the great events they relate to, unleſs they had really done ſo?

Could the Children of *Iſrael* have been impoſed on to receive an ARK, and a TABERNACLE, then forged, and a compleat ſet of SERVICE and LITURGY, as deſcending from *Moſes* by the direction of God, unleſs that ARK and that SERVICE had come to them from their Anceſtors, as authoriſed by God?

Could the whole People have ſubmitted to pay TITHE, FIRST-FRUITS, *&c.* upon any feigned revelation? Or,

Could the Tribe of *Levi*, without divine authority, have ſubmitted, not only to the being originally without a *portion in Iſrael*, but to the being incapable of any, in hopes of the contributions of the people; which, however large when the whole twelve Tribes ſerved at the ſame Temple, became very ſcanty when ten of them withdrew their allegiance from heaven?

Could ever the * *Book of the* LAW, if conſigned to the *Levites*, and promulgated, have been loſt, ſo as to give room for new fictions? Or could a *Book of the* LAW have been forged, if there was none precedent, and put upon the People, as a book

* *N. B.* The Book of the LAW, *found in the days of* Joſias, *was the Copy of the* COVENANT in the hand of *Moſes*.

book that had been delivered to the *Levites* by *Moſes*? If no book at all ever was delivered by him to them, what authority could be pretended for ſuch a book?

Had a book been to be forged, in order to be received by the People, could it have contained ſo many ſcandalous reflexions and accuſations againſt the *People*, and ſo many fatal threats and predictions concerning them? and, if it had been ſo framed, would it have been received as authentick?

If the LAW, *&c.* was forged, it muſt have been before the days of *David*; becauſe by the ſacred hymns, in his time, the publication of the LAW is celebrated, and the LAW was obſerved: And yet the time between the entry of *Iſrael* into the *Land*, and the reign of *David*, being but about four hundred years, is too ſhort a ſpace for forgetting the real manner of that Entry, and forging another, to be received by a People, whoſe geneaology was ſo fixed, and whoſe time was reckoned by ſuch PERIODS.

If *the Book of the* LAW was not forged before the reign of *David*, it could not poſſibly be forged after, unleſs the whole hiſtory of the kingdom, the tabernacle, the temple, and all the ſacred hymns and prophecies, are looked upon as one compleat fiction; becauſe the tabernacle, the temple, the œconomy of the kingdom, the ſacred hymns, and all the other Writings ſaid to be ſacred, bear formal relation to the LAW.

But, that all theſe things were not ſuppoſitious, is evident from the anxious zeal that poſſeſſed the *Jews* who returned from the captivity; from their ſolicitude to reſtore the city, the temple, and the ſacred ſervice; from their ſtrict examination of their genealogies, and ſcrupulous care to comply with the LAW.

The ſpace between the captivity and the return was ſo ſhort, that ſome who ſaw the firſt temple, ſaw alſo the ſecond, and many who were themſelves, or at leaſt whoſe fathers had been, Officers in the firſt temple, returned to the ſervice of the ſecond: ſo that it is utterly impoſſible that the hiſtory, the liturgy, the ſervice of the *Jews*, preceding the return, ſhould be a fiction earlier than the return.

And the ſtory of this nation, from that PERIOD, falls in ſo much with the hiſtory of the reſt of the world; their ſacred books have been ſo ſoon after that tranſlated, and they have been ſo famous for the tenaciouſneſs of their LAWS, that there is no poſſibility of ſuſpecting that their LAW and hiſtory was forged later than the return.

And, if it is granted, that the devotions, the precepts, the inſtitutions, and rites and ceremonies, of this LAW, and the great lines of their Hiſtory, are not forged; one needs, as to the preſent conſideration, be but little ſolicitous concerning the accuracy of the *Copy* of the Books of the LAW, and of the other ſacred books; whether there may not have been ſome miſtakes or interpolations. It is not with one or one hundred words or ſentences we have to do; it is with the ſyſtem of the SACRIFICATURE, and the other religious laws and ſervices of the *Jews*, and with the political eſtabliſhment of their *Theocratical* government, and the authority for the eſtabliſhment of both, that we have, at preſent, concern.

For, if ſuch a ſyſtem of religious ſervices and ceremonies was revealed and commanded by God; if, for the greater certainty, it was reduced into writing by *Moſes*, by divine direction; if ſuch a model of government was framed as is manifeſtly calculated for keeping up the obſervance of thoſe ſervices, and preſerving the memory of the inſtitution,

tution, and keeping up the authority of the book wherein it is recorded; and if the nation, to whom this inſtitution was delivered, have preſerved it accordingly: compleat evidence thence ariſes to us of the Divinity of the inſtitution; which confirms what has already been deduced from nature, and the hiſtory of the world, concerning REVEALED RELIGION; and leads to a demonſtrative proof of the truth of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, to which all the emblematical inſtitutions tend, and in which they center.

And, if one can but be once ſatisfied that this people was choſen and conſtituted in a way ſurpriſingly particular, principally for preſerving the ORACLES of GOD, the religion revealed by him to men, and the evidence thereof; one ſhall have little difficulty to believe that they were reaſonably exact in this particular:

Eſpecially if he recollects the abſolute ſcrupuloſity with which they preſerve the *ſacred Books*, not having dared, ſince the days of *Jeſus Chriſt*, though their diſputes with the *Chriſtians* gave them the ſtrongeſt temptation, to alter a letter, or to inſert in the text uſed in their Synagogues thoſe very POINTS which they have contrived to vary the ſignification of the words, to ſerve their purpoſes, though all of them ſay, and moſt of them believe, theſe POINTS to be of divine original.

But the matter does not reſt ſingly upon the preſumption of accuracy and fidelity in the *Jews*: We have a tranſlation made, near two hundred years before Chriſt, into *Greek*; and, by comparing that verſion with the *Hebrew* kept by the *Jews*, the diverſities are not ſo many or ſo material as to make any difference in the ſenſe and tendency of the whole. They may all have flowed from the ignorance or careleſſneſs of interpreters, and from miſtakes and accidents incident to Copyers; and,

where

where there is any diverſity, it is eaſy to judge on which ſide the miſtake lies, and the error muſt naturally be imputed to the Tranſlation, which cannot be preſumed to have been handled with ſo great care and reverence as the Original.

And we have, beſides, an *Hebrew* Copy of the *Pentateuch* kept by the *Samaritans*, mortal enemies to the *Jews*, and who would not probably co-operate with them towards any fraud. This Copy, a very few immaterial things excepted, is literally the ſame with that of the *Jews*; and as the *Pentateuch* contains the very kernel, and the ſtanding proof of that revelation which ſupports the Chriſtian religion, it ſeems to be the direct act of providence for confirming the truth of that important piece of revelation, that the *Cuthians* ſucceeded the ten tribes, and that they took up ſo much of their religion as had been retained by theſe tribes, after their defection from the houſe of *David*, and preſerved as ſacred the *Pentateuch*, which would have been a check upon the *Jews*, had they falſified theirs; and is a confirmation of the truth, as they have not, out of the mouth of enemies, at leaſt of ſuch as were in no confederacy with them.

And the exiſtence of a Copy of the *Pentateuch* in the hands of the *Samaritans*, who muſt have had it from the ten tribes, and they again muſt have retained them from the days of *Jeroboam*'s revolt, is a proof, not only that that book, as it now ſtands was extant, and the ſtandard of the *Iſraelitiſh* ſacred ſervice and faith in the days of *David* and *Solomon*, but alſo that all the Copies of the *Pentateuch* were not loſt, as is fooliſhly ſuppoſed, in the days of *Joſiah*; this one being then, clearly, amongſt the revolted tribes, as the rule of the faith and practice of ſuch of them as had not bowed the knee to *Baal*; beſides many thouſands that,

that, probably were in the hands of the *Levites*, and ſcattered over *Judah* and *Benjamin*: ſo that the Copy of the LAW found in the temple, in the time of *Joſiah*, was the Copy of the COVENANT in the *hand of Moſes*, as the text aſſerts, and not the Copy of the *Pentateuch*.

Theſe reflexions put the divine authority of the *Jewiſh* Inſtitution beyond all doubt; they ſhew it was the indiſpenſible duty of the *Jews* to obey and obſerve it; and prove demonſtrably, that it would be our duty as well as theirs, to comply with the ſame inſtitution and obſervances, unleſs theſe ſhall appear to have been ſuperſeded and changed by the ſame divine authoriy.

And it is an event that calls loudly for our attention, that this inſtitution, eſtabliſhed ſolemnly by God, has ceaſed: the temple, choſen for his reſidence, has been deſtroyed; and his own peculiar People, whoſe head and protector he was to have been, and was bound by Covenant to be, have been utterly unpeopled and ſcattered near 1700 years ago.

To obtain ſatisfaction on this head, it is fit to recollect, that almoſt all the *Jewiſh* religious ſervice conſiſted in external emblematical acts, rites, and obſervances, which, in themſelves, and but for the inſtitution, and what was intended to be repreſented by them, ſerved for no good purpoſe.

The *Hebrew* word tranſlated the LAW, carries not in it, properly, the idea of authority enjoining or commanding, but it is taken from a word that ſignifies, originally, *to demonſtrate, to direct, point out, the way*; and all the *precepts, commands, ſtatutes, ordinances*, and *appointments*, come promiſcuouſly under that word which we tranſlate LAW.

It

It muſt be remembred, that throughout all the ſacred *Hebrew* writings, as well in the LAW, as in the HISTORY, HYMNS, and the PROPHECIES, many matters concerning the LAW are declared by the Deity, and ſentiments expreſſed which regulate the underſtanding, end, and meaning of it.

Nothing is more diſtinct than the ſeveral Inſtitutions, the poſitive and negative precepts of the LAW, if no more than the outward operation or obſervance is in queſtion; but we find that, throughout the SCRIPTURES, and particularly the book of PSALMS, it was not, ſingly, the practice of the Precepts, but *the meditation on them day and night*, that was the duty and delight of thoſe that feared God; it was their prayer to be made to underſtand, to be taught them; it was the duty of the *Prieſt* and the *Prince* in a particular manner, and it was the expreſs command of God to *Joſhua, to meditate in the Law day and night; then ſhould he do wiſely.*

It is no wonder that the LAW required meditation to unravel the true end and meaning of it; ſince, to inſtance in one particular, the principal inſtitution of it, to wit, SACRIFICE, in itſelf had no virtue at all, and it was contrary to common ſenſe and reaſon it ſhould have any.

It is not only contrary to common ſenſe, that ſacrifice ſhould have any effect towards removing ſin, and placating the Deity; but the ſame God who inſtituted ſacrifice, tells over and over again the people, to whom he gave that Inſtitution, that he has no pleaſure in ſacrifice; that the blood of goats cannot atone for ſin; that their ſacrifices were uſeleſs towards the ends for which they imagined them profitable.

What then muſt the religious *Jews*, who believed that ſacrifice was of divine inſtitution, who believed

believed at the ſame time that it was of no effect towards pardoning ſin and procuring favour, and who were bound to meditate on the depths, the hidden things of the Law, conclude? And what muſt we conclude who believe as they did? Can we conclude otherwiſe, than that uncouth, unnatural obſervance, unprofitable and ineffectual in itſelf, was appointed to commemorate or point out ſomething, emblematically, that the Deity was deſirous to have pointed out and kept in mind?

As one great end of the religious inſtitution, and of the frame of the commonwealth of the *Jews*, was to keep up perpetually the ordinance of SACRIFICATURE; another great end was to preſerve, with proper evidence and authority, all the revelations and providences of God, recorded by *Moſes* and the other inſpired Writers.

We know, then, certainly, from the revelation made by God and preſerved by the *Jews*,

That God was to be merciful to man; that he promiſed *The ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the head of the ſerpent*; and *that the ſeed of the ſerpent ſhould bruiſe his heel.*

That SACRIFICE was coeval with this revelation, or near it; *Abel* ſacrificed acceptably.

That *blood-ſhed* was deemed holy; and *ſprinkling that blood* the mean and outward ſymbol, of making every thing on which it was ſprinkled, the Prieſt, the Altar, the Ark, &c. holy.

That, when God firſt declared his purpoſe of ſelecting *Abraham*, and his family, and made a COVENANT with him *to multiply his ſeed as the ſtars of heaven*, and *to give him the land of* Canaan, he, at the ſame time, and with the ſame breath, declared that *in his ſeed all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed.*

That

That the ſame declaration was often repeated to *Abraham*, and to his ſucceſſors *Iſaac* and *Jacob*; which became the foundation of the hopes and expectations of their deſcendents, made them carefully preſerve their genealogies, and greatly value themſelves on being of the ſeed of thoſe men, of whoſe ſeed ſhould come THAT wherein all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed.

That the firſt part of the COVENANT or Promiſe was, literally, and in a very marvellous manner, fulfilled; The *Iſraelites* were marvellouſly put, and kept in poſſeſſion of the land of *Canaan*: But, whilſt they ſtaid there, the ſecond part was not performed, nor will they admit that it is to this hour performed.

That though this ſecond part was not performed whilſt the Nation remained in poſſeſſion of the firſt part of the promiſe, yet it was perpetually kept in view, and freſh hopes, by repeated promiſes, given of the ſame bleſſing, under very extraordinary deſcriptions.

The *Sceptre* was not to depart from *Judah* until *Shiloh* came, and to him was to be the gathering of people.

The *Throne* was to be eſtabliſhed with the ſeed of *David* for ever; the Covenant was eſtabliſhed with him; and of this SEED of his, ſuch marvellous things are ſpoken, as do not agree to any of his carnal ſucceſſors, or to any meer man.

This *Son of David* goes under the name of the *Anointed of the Lord*, and this anointed one is ſaid to be alſo the *Son of God*, the *King* Anointed on the holy hill of *Sion*. *I will declare the decree: the Lord hath ſaid unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*

A *Virgin* was *to conceive, and to bring forth a ſon, whoſe name was to be Emmanuel. A new thing was*

was to happen on the earth, a woman was to compaſs a man, Jer. xxxi. 22.

To the houſe of *Iſrael a child was to be born*, to them *a ſon was to be given, the government was to be on his ſhoulder: and his name was to be called Wonderful, Counſellor, The Mighty God, The everlaſting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increaſe of his government and peace there was to be no end, upon the throue of David*, &c. Iſa. ix. 6. 7.

A rod was to come forth of the ſtem of Jeſſe, which ſhould ſtand for an enſign to the people, and to which all the Gentiles ſhould ſeek, whoſe reſt was to be glorious.

Numerous are the promiſes and predictions of peace and ſalvation to come, not only to the *Jews*, but to all nations, by a mighty CONQUEROR, a great PRINCE, who was to ſit on the throne of *David*; who is called *David* [*i. e.* the beloved] in prophecies delivered hundreds of years after king *David*'s death; who was to rule in peace, to lead, and to defend, his people; who is called *The righteouſneſs, The holineſs, The ſalvation of Jehovah, The righteous ſervant of the Lord, who was to deliver Iſrael from their ſins*, who was to be a *Light*, who was to be *Salvation to the Gentiles*; who was to be given *for a covenant to the people*; who was *to reſtore peace and joy* to Mankind; *a fountain was to be opened to the houſe of David, and the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin, and for uncleanneſs.*

The Righteous ſervant of the Lord was to ſuffer for Mankind, for the ſins of the people; he was to bear their iniquities; to be bruiſed for them; to be unjuſtly condemned in judgment, and to ſuffer death; to make his body an offering for ſin: but he was to divide a portion with the great, &c. *becauſe he had expoſed his body unto death, and he was numbered*

with

with the tranſgreſſors, and made interceſſion for the tranſgreſſors.

This extraordinary perſon, who was to do thoſe wondrous things, is deſcribed *as ſitting on the right hand of God*; *as the fellow of God, againſt whom the ſword was to be employed to ſmite him*; *and the people were*, at laſt, *to look upon him whom they had pierced*; *and to mourn for him as one mourneth for his eldeſt ſon*: But this was not to be till *the ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication ſhould be poured out on the houſe of David, and on the inhabitants of Jeruſalem.*

Meſſiah the anointed one, the Prince, was to be cut off, at a determined period, *but not for himſelf.*

And many and various predictions are ſcattered every where throughout the ſacred Writings, that the *Jews* ſhall be rejected, and the *Gentiles* called to the ſervice of God, and to enjoy the bleſſings promiſed to *Iſrael.*

Theſe ſeveral wonderful predictions and promiſes, with many more of the ſame kind, could not poſſibly be overlooked by the *Jews*; or thought to relate to any thing but the great, the important branch of the original COVENANT with *Abraham*, not performed when the Nation was in poſſeſſion of the land, to wit, that *in his ſeed all the nations of the earth were to be bleſſed.* This was too conſiderable a part of the Covenant to be over-looked, or to remain unperformed; and it is no wonder that the *Jews*, from it, and from theſe ſeveral predictions, promiſes, and declarations, that related to it, expected with confidence *that bleſſing to all nations* in the MESSIAH, who was to be of *the ſeed of David.*

Taking then all theſe predictions and promiſes together, and joining them with the original COVENANT made with *Abraham*, it is as clear as the

the ſun's light, that the extraordinary perſon promiſed, and deſcribed to be *the ſon of David*, and *the Son of God*, *the anointed one*, *the beloved*, was *the ſeed* promiſed to *Abraham*, *in whom all the nations of the earth were to be bleſſed*.

And therefore the *Jews*, who believed the SCRIPTURE to be infallible truth, were inſuperably determined to believe this extraordinary perſon, whom they call the MESSIAH, was to come; and we, who believe the ſame SCRIPTURE to be *the word of God*, muſt neceſſarily conclude, that he either is come, or is to come; or elſe we muſt admit that God has given his authority to the belief of a falſhood, which is monſtrouſly abſurd.

The *Jews* may value themſelves as much as they pleaſe on their being the favourite people, and may flatter themſelves in the opinion that the MESSIAS was intended peculiarly for them, and that *the* COVENANT *with Abraham*, and the whole ſtructure of, and divine providence about, their law and nation, was meant only, and primarily, for them: but we, *of the nations*, beg leave to differ with them, and to inſiſt, that *in the ſeed of Abraham all the nations of the earth*, and amongſt them we, *were to be bleſſed*; that their MESSIAS was to be *the Light of the Nations*; that he was given *for a* COVENANT *to all people*; and that he was *to bring ſalvation to all men*.

And we muſt obſerve, that all that part of the COVENANT that regarded the land of *Canaan*, and the *Jewiſh* people in particular, was conditional, forfeitable upon breach of COVENANT by the *Jews*; and actually forfeited, as they themſelves muſt own, and as their own Scriptures teſtify: whereas the promiſe of bleſſing to the *Nations*, in the ſeed of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, is abſolute, and unconditional, and believed neceſſarily

ceſſarily to be performed, whatever came of the *Jewiſh* law and commonwealth.

The City and Government of the *Jews* is now deſtroyed, and diſſolved; they are unpeopled, as we may ſay, and remain ſcattered up and down the face of the earth; their ſyſtem of religious ſervice is now no more practiſed, nor practicable; no man can trace his deſcent from *Aaron*, ſo no man among them can lawfully ſhed blood; nor can any prove his deſcent from *David*, ſo none can know the MESSIAH by his pedigree, were he yet to come. It is near 1700 years ſince the temple, to which the *Meſſenger of the Covenant* was to come, is deſtroyed utterly; and yet the *Jews* will neither admit that the MESSIAS is come, nor that their Scripture is falſe; which is very extraordinary.

It was equally the intereſt of the *Nations*, as of the *Jews*, to have looked out for the *advent of the* MESSIAS; but they did not know what concern they had in that event, and therefore could not be ſolicitous about it. The *Jews* were juſtly ſolicitous about it, and had all the marks, and tokens, given by infallible Revelation, by which to know it; but, in purſuance of the blindneſs predicted to themſelves, they did not ſee it.

It is an amazing providence, that the *Jews*, who looked for the MESSIAH, did not ſee or receive him when he came; and that the *Gentiles*, who knew little, and had no expectation of him, ſaw and received him, and in him the *bleſſing*. This is ſurpriſing; but it did not happen by chance; it was predicted by *Moſes* and the *Prophets*.

Daniel had fixed a determined Time for the Advent of the MESSIAH; the whole Nation knew it, and expected him, about the time he came; their expectations ran ſo high, that the confidence

confidence founded upon them, pulled on their ruin, and final deſtruction. The MESSIAS came when they expected him, and yet they knew him ſo little, that they became his executioners, and put him to death as a blaſphemer.

In *Jacob*'s bleſſing to *Judah*, or rather prophecy concerning him, *the Sceptre was not to depart from Judah, nor the Lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh came*; and all the *Jews*, by *Shiloh*, underſtood the MESSIAS.

In *Daniel*'s Prophecy the advent of the MESSIAH, who is to be *cut off*, is to be followed by the utter deſtruction of the city, the temple, the law, the commonwealth of the *Jews*.

Though the *Jews* were ſo blind as not to ſee the MESSIAS when he came, but, inſtead of receiving him, to cut him off; it is aſtoniſhing, that, when they had cut him off, when they ſaw their city, their temple, their commonwealth, and their holy ſervice, at an end, they did not ſee their miſtake, and look to him whom they had pierced.

If *the Sceptre was not to depart from Judah till Shiloh came*, it is a neceſſary conſequence, that, if the *Sceptre* is actually departed, *Shiloh* muſt certainly be come.

At the time predicted, and when the *Jews* expected the MESSIAH, a man of the tribe of *Judah*, and family of *David*, appeared in *Judea*, *preaching repentance, and remiſſion of ſins*: He declared he was the MESSIAS, *the Son of God*, ſent to ſave Mankind; and, as an evidence of his miſſion, wrought in the ſight of the people great numbers of amazing miracles; he opened the eyes of the blind, and the ears of the deaf; he reſtored ſpeech to the dumb, and health to multitudes of ſick perſons, by his ſingle *fiat*: He ſaid he came to fulfil, and put an end to *the Law*, to die for the

the ſins of mankind: He taught as never man taught. But, being in a form too humble and lowly for the expectations of the *Jews*, he was arraigned of high treaſon againſt the *Roman* power, and of high treaſon againſt the head of the *Jewiſh* commonwealth, that is Blaſphemy; was tried, convicted upon his own acknowledgment that he was *the Son of God*, and ignominiouſly crucified, and buried: And though he did not uſe his divine power to avoid that death which he ſaid he was to undergo, yet he ever had that power to confirm his own promiſe that he was to riſe again the third day; he roſe, inſtructed the diſciples he had elected, and aſcended into heaven; having firſt promiſed to ſend the HOLY SPIRIT, the COMFORTER; who was accordingly ſent, and filled the *Apoſtles*, and *Diſciples*.

As the *Jews*, that is the *High Prieſt* and the *Nation*, not knowing this Perſon, put him to death for pretending to be the MESSIAH, it is but natural to think they would for ſome time perſiſt in their opinion; and therefore they made uſe of all means to juſtify their own opinion and conduct, to weaken his credit, to make him paſs upon the world for an Impoſtor, and to oppoſe the propagation of his doctrine.

As the heathen world was at that time deep ſunk in ignorance and ſuperſtition, and, where Superſtition did not prevail, ſtrongly biaſſed to *Atheiſm*, the philoſophy of *Epicurus*; it was againſt all probability that the ſurpriſing, the ſelf-denying doctrine of *Jeſus* ſhould prevail.

Nevertheleſs, in leſs than 300 years, in ſpite of the fierce oppoſition of the *Jews*; in ſpite of the many Perſecutions from the *Roman Emperors*, who were then Lords of the whole known earth; in ſpite of the ignorance and weakneſs of, the firſt followers of *Chriſt*, the Apoſtles, who were

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choſen of the loweſt rank of the people, the doctrine of that crucified *Jeſus* ſo far prevailed, as to become the religion of the whole known world, (the *Jews* excepted:) ſuch influence had the teaching of the HOLY SPIRIT, and the Miracles wrought.

If any man ſhall wantonly think fit to call in queſtion (notwithſtanding the evidence) that miracles were wrought, and ſhall aver that none were performed; let him conſider, whether, on that ſuppoſition, it is not a miracle, and evidence of Divine power beyond all cavilling, that this doctrine, in the hands of ſuch men, againſt ſuch oppoſition, prevailed over mankind in ſo ſhort a ſpace, without the aſſiſtance of any power but the power of God, and the proofs brought from the Scriptures.

The doctrine taught by the followers of *Jeſus* was, That he was the *Son of God*, the promiſed MESSIAS; that he came, purſuant to *the* COVENANT *of* GRACE, to ſhed his blood for the remiſſion of ſins; that pardon and grace was thereby to be had; that the LAW ſerved only to point him out, and deſcribe him; and that the blood of Sacrifices were but emblems, and types, of his blood; who, having therein waſhed mankind from their ſins, was for ever to make interceſſion for ſuch as believed, and expected mercy.

This doctrine prevailed early over ſuch of the *Jews* as waited humbly for the Salvation of God, and whoſe notions were not totally debauched; it prevailed over ſuch of the *Gentiles* as retained notions of atonement by blood: but it made no progreſs among the hardened *Jews*, who crucified their MESSIAH, who by all arts whatever, except by falſifying the text of their ſacred Books, endeavoured to ſtifle the new doctrine, and keep their own in countenance; though it is highly

aſtoniſhing

aſtoniſhing it ſhould not have prevailed over them, when their city and temple were raſed, and when it became the light of the *Gentile* world.

It is eaſy, by running over the many typical and prophetical predictions in the LAW and the PROPHETS, and ſhewing the harmony and accompliſhment in the perſon of *Jeſus*, to heighten the demonſtration of the truth of the Chriſtian Religion, and the amazement at the ſurpriſing hardneſs of the *Jews*; but, poſtponing that for a little, can any man, from what has been already ſtated, doubt that the Chriſtian Religion is that pointed out by the *Judaick* diſpenſation, and that it is Divine, unleſs he admit that the *Judaick* diſpenſation is a pure forgery, or that the Deity can fail in fulfilling his Promiſes?

Or, can any man reflect on the blindneſs and obſtinacy of the *Jews*, in ſhutting out the light which ſhone amongſt themſelves, and which from them only ſhone out to the reſt of the world, without obſerving the immediate finger of God in this aſtoniſhing event which happened, being predicted?

Conſidering with due attention theſe circumſtances, it is impoſſible not to perceive ſkill much greater than human contrivance, as well as power Divine, in preparing and furniſhing evidence for the truth of the Chriſtian Religion; or, which is the ſame thing, the Doctrine of pardon and mercy through the blood of *Chriſt*.

This Doctrine, not reſulting from nature or reaſon, is not capable of proof *à priori*, or from reaſon; and therefore muſt depend on evidence external, as other matters of fact do.

Miracles, or the immediate Interpoſition of Almighty Power controuling the common courſe of nature, may be proof of revelation; but the proof of thoſe miracles may decay, by length of time,

and

and by degrees, unleſs ſome very extraordinary mean is uſed by the Deity to preſerve the proof of ſuch miracles.

Prediction of natural events that do not depend upon a certain unchanging courſe of nature, is, when the event happens, proof that the *Prophet* had his prediction from heaven.

Prediction of miraculous or ſupernatural events, when theſe events happen, is the higheſt evidence of the intervention of the Deity; and, if one can be certain that the event was predicted, and accordingly happened, no doubt at all can remain the Prediction and the Event were both from God; and, ſuppoſing ſuch a thing to have happened for the confirmation of any doctrine, the only requiſite to perpetuate that proof to poſterity would be, to provide ſuch a hiſtory of the prediction and accompliſhments, as could not, juſtly be ſuſpected, or called in queſtion.

The chief cauſes for denying aſſent to the truth of facts recorded in hiſtory are,

That the Hiſtorian may have been ill informed, and may have taken what he wrote without ſufficient evidence;

That the Hiſtorian may be ſingle, unſupported by any other collateral evidence, in which caſe his veracity may be queſtioned; and,

That the Hiſtory, in length of time, may be vitiated, interpolated, or altered, to be accommodated to prevailing notions or opinions.

Now, if the ſacred Inſtitution and civil Œconomy, of the ſeed of *Abraham* is conſidered, as calculated to receive, to preſerve, and to communicate the revelation of the good will of God to man, it furniſhes a teſtimony to that truth ſuperior to all doubt, and to any other evidence that ever ſupported a matter of fact.

The Hiſtorian could not be deceived: the miracles related, were wrought in his and in the ſight of the whole people, and many of them not ſingle acts, but reiterated, ſome repeated for forty years together.

The Hiſtorian cannot be looked upon to be ſingle; (I conſider the whole People as joint hiſtorians atteſting the truth of *Moſes*'s relation): what he relates was done in the ſight of many hundreds of thouſands; they all agree the relation to be fact; they receive his account of it, hold it certain and ſacred; obſerve the precepts; expect the promiſes; ſubmit to the ſanction; and hold their whole land, the poſſeſſion of each individual, and the offices in the Church and State, by that tenure.

The ſuſpicion of any alteration, or interpolation, to promote any favourite point or opinion, is abſolutely excluded, by the religious reverence had, at all times, for the ſacred *Book*; by the many reproaches every where to be met with therein againſt the *Jews*, which their ſcrupuloſity prevented their meddling with; and by the many predictions, not only of thoſe miſchiefs to the Nation which happened to them before the ſacred *Book* went out of their own hands, and language, into other hands, and languages, but of thoſe miſchiefs alſo which happened ſome hundreds of years after the Scriptures were publiſhed in foreign languages, and continue to happen at this day; I mean, their rejecting the MESSIAH, and putting him to death, the ſubverſion of the ſtate and temple, and their diſperſion, blindneſs, and obſtinacy: for I take it to be an event of all others the moſt ſurpriſing, and the leaſt to be accounted for from the nature of things, that the *Jews* ſhould continue, under ſuch circumſtances, and in ſuch numbers as they are, firm even to death in the belief of their Scriptures,

tures, and the hopes of a MESSIAH, and yet blind and obſtinate to madneſs in rejecting that MESSIAH, whom every one that conſiders, but they, evidently ſee, and with joy ſubmit to.

Had the nation of the *Jews* ſeen in *Jeſus* the MESSIAH, and ſubmitted to him, the Scriptures would not have been fulfilled.

Had they, after his death, univerſally acknowledged him, as many individuals of the nation did, they, as theſe individuals did, laying aſide all national diſtinctions, would have been ſunk and loſt in the general maſs of Chriſtians; and we would have had no more than an hiſtorical account of their having once exiſted, as we have of the *Athenians*, *Spartans*, *Samnites*, &c.

Had this been the caſe, the authority of the ſacred *Book* would have reſted ſolely on itſelf; there would not have been one living witneſs to prove its authentickneſs, or to prevent the ſuſpicion that it was forged, as *the Fragments of the book of Enoch*, *the Teſtaments of the twelve Patriarchs*, *the Sibylline Oracles*, and multitudes of other pious cheats, moſt certainly were.

Or, had the *Jewiſh* Nation maintained its land, preſerved its government, and turned *Chriſtian* with the reſt of the world, the books they ſhould then exhibit as ſacred, would not be altogether free from ſuſpicion: Thoſe, who combat their truth, as they ſtand, would not fail to ſuggeſt, that paſſages had been accommodated to the, then, preſent belief of the Nation, and that the whole might be a forgery, to introduce a belief, which ſome impoſtors of that Nation had a mind to ſet up.

But, as the *Jewiſh* Nation have ever rejected, and do ſtill continue to reject, with the utmoſt horror and deteſtation, the belief of thoſe truths, which their own books are the chief evidence of,

they are the moſt unexceptionable witneſſes that the heart or head of the moſt ſcrupulous Man could wiſh for; it being abſolutely impoſſible that they can concur in any fraud or fiction for the ſupport of that doctrine which they utterly abominate.

To reflect a little, then, on the evidence of this *Revelation*: Here is a People choſen, in the loins, as one may ſay, of their parents, to be, as the Deity is pleaſed to declare, witneſſes for him; formed into a very great and a very peculiar people; diſtinguiſhed by particular inſtitutions, and by the immediate hand of God kept diſtinct from all the nations of the Earth; receiving, directly from God, revelations, inſtitutions, predictive and emblematical, and many oracular declarations; preſerved by the peculiar providence of God in poſſeſſion of their land, and in the practice of thoſe prophetical inſtitutions for above 1500 years; believing that thoſe predictions deſcribed an event, which was at hand, big with the greateſt bleſſings to them, and to the whole univerſe, and looking out hourly for the accompliſhment.

But, when that great event happens, this ſingular people, obſtinately blind, refuſing to ſee it, and rejecting the benefit of it; not by accident, but in purſuance of many predictions in their own ſacred *Book*; and thereby remaining the irreproachable witneſſes of the truth of the ſacred *Revelation*, which from the beginning they were choſen to bear evidence of.

Nor is their continuing, with that qualification of witneſſes, at this day, leſs marvellous, or leſs the immediate act of God, than their preſervation in their land, before the advent of the *Meſſiah*, formerly was.

Who can with attention, and without prejudice, view the contrivance, the ſkill, the interpoſition

tion of the finger of God, for ſo many ages, to provide, prepare, and preſerve, ſo ſurpriſing, and ſo unexceptionable a proof for his revelation of grace to mankind, and at the ſame time ſuffer himſelf to doubt whether all this is not impoſture, purely becauſe God has been pleaſed to reveal ſome things that do not conform ſo well to his apprehenſions; tho' he knows full well that his underſtanding is, almoſt in every thing, ſcanty and weak?

Who can doubt that, if God intended to reveal peace and mercy to mankind, he would make the evidence of that revelation ſtrong and permanent?

And who can ſee the evidence, and believe, without adoring, and determining to ſerve that beneficent Being, who has provided ſuch evidence of his grace, for the comfort, direction, and encouragement of mankind, to purſue their duty, and to arrive at felicity?

Early we ſaw man undone, unleſs there was ſome hidden method in reſerve with the Deity for aboliſhing his ſin; and in a deſperate ſtate, if hope was not created, by revealing that method, which to man muſt naturally be unknown.

We ſaw, alſo, that mankind had hopes from the earlieſt times; that theſe hopes had in them ſome connexion with the ſhedding of blood; and, from the univerſality of the hope of pardon on that principle, we concluded it highly probable that theſe hopes were given, and that mean pointed out by the Deity; both the one and the other being not only without any countenance from, but even, as ſome men have ſeemed to underſtand them, contrary to reaſon.

We ſaw, that, if theſe hopes, and the mean uſed, were from God, there muſt be ſome ſtanding evidence, provided by the Deity, for produ-

cing in man belief in his mercy, and the juſt conſequences of that belief.

And, now, we ſee, in fact, that ſuch evidence is provided; which juſtifies the hopes and the practice of the antient world, at the ſame time that it receives confirmation from them; and ſhews clearly that this REVELATION was given from the beginning, and that *the* LAW *of Moſes* is a REPUBLICATION of it.

This then being, undeniably, the caſe, how abſurd and pernicious muſt the ſentiments and conduct be of theſe unlearned, but conceited men, who, without examining nature or revelation carefully, preſume to decide magiſterially againſt REVEALED RELIGION; and employ all the talents the bountiful God of nature has beſtowed upon them, not to examine and inquire into, but to diſcredit and defeat the evidence that he has, with ſuch infinite care, provided; and thereby harden themſelves, and all ſuch whoſe hearts and heads are turned like theirs, in falſe and impious notions?

Tindal (and all who have thought, before or after him, as he does) will have *the law of* NATURE, that is, *the light of* NATURE, a perfect rule for mens actions; and who doubts this? He ſays this light is abſolutely ſufficient to guide men in their conduct towards God, and towards one another; and this is no doubt alſo true. But, then, he concludes, that this *light of* NATURE is, by itſelf, ſufficient in our preſent ſtate to lead us comfortably through this life to happineſs in the next: but here he errs, manifeſtly, either from want of attention to truths which he admits, or from building on falſe principles which, without due examination, he has adopted.

That *the light of* NATURE, with the inſtructions the firſt man had, was ſufficient to guide him

him before he ſinned, is certain; and that the ſame light, after committing that ſin, was a ſufficient monitor againſt committing more, may alſo be true: But how was this firſt Man to find out, that the firſt ſin he committed was to be pardoned, if that God againſt whom he ſinned, had not told him ſo much? Is there any thing in NATURE to let a man know, certainly, that the infinite, the perfect, the immutable juſtice of God will pardon, connive, or wink at ſin, the tranſgreſſion of the eternal law of order, in ſetting up another ſovereign, without ſome cauſe, motive or conſideration, of infinite moment, to determine the Deity ſo to do? Or can NATURE find out that there was truly the interpoſition of ſuch a cauſe?

Mr. *Tindal* would avoid this difficulty, by ſuppoſing that the *light of* NATURE teaches man that God is merciful, and that he will pardon, upon repentance, and a purpoſe of amendment: and, if this was true, his argument would go pretty far. But this is moſt certainly not true: the *Deiſt* borrows, in this, an article from REVEALED RELIGION, which, by aſcribing to *the light of* NATURE, he would make uſe of to overthrow that very Religion that diſcovered it.

The light of NATURE ſhews the God of nature to be bountiful, good, benign, clement, beneficent and merciful, if the Idea is carried no further than a diſpoſition not to hurt, and to relieve proper objects of relief: but the *light of* NATURE does in no way ſhew that this perfect Being is merciful to ſinners, or that his clemency or beneficence can have for its object the offender againſt immutable juſtice. The ideas of Indignation againſt ſin, and puniſhment of treſpaſs, are ſo neceſſarily joined with, and inſeparable from the idea of infinite, perfect juſtice, that *the light*

of NATURE, without deſtroying the idea of the eſſential juſtice of God, or without diſcovering what, without REVELATION, it could not diſcover, that juſtice was, by the interpoſition of an atonement of infinite conſideration, to be ſatisfied, could not poſſibly frame to itſelf any notion that mercy was to take place, or that repentance, and purpoſe of amendment, were to be of any moment.

REVELATION, indeed, has altered the caſe; it has deſcribed God as merciful, long-ſuffering, patient, and pardoning tranſgreſſion, upon repentance: But, then, it has reconciled that diſcovery to the dictates of nature, which ſpoke juſt the reverſe, by intimating that an atonement has, by infinite mercy, been found out to ſatisfy immutable, eſſential juſtice.

Thus do weak, preſumptuous men miſlead themſelves, to lull their conſcience, that glimpſe of the light of nature, aſleep; and, to prevent the trouble it muſt give them, they lay hold of a principle diſcovered, and proved, only, by REVELATION; but, becauſe they would not be beholden to REVELATION for it, they boldly, and falſely, aver it is deducible from REASON; and then make uſe of it to ſupport an *Hypotheſis*, of their own framing, that ſhall overturn that REVELATION, from which the ſupport to their *Hypotheſis* is ſought.

DEISM is not tenible without ſuppoſing remiſſion of ſin to be neceſſarily conſequent upon repentance, and this to be diſcoverable by the *light of* NATURE. Remiſſion does not appear from NATURE to be the conſequence of repentance, but rather the contrary; the diſcovery and proof of this propoſition is owing ſolely to REVELATION; and yet there are men, who would be thought wiſe and honeſt, who would be thought

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to believe the propoſition, and yet make it the ſtudy of their lives to overthrow the evidence on which it is built.

It would be very happy if theſe *Gentlemen*, who pique themſelves ſo much on the ſtudy, the knowledge, *the light of* NATURE, entered a little more into the conſideration of themſelves, and of thoſe things they ſo much pretend to know, and to admire; and beſtowed but half the time they take to direct others, in finding out their own condition, and what they have to hope or fear: Did they but look at their own caſe, they ſhould be leſs wanton, leſs preſumptuous.

What man is there, who, entering into himſelf, and comparing honeſtly what he now is with what man originally was, and ought to have continued, does not ſee the corruption, the miſery, the helpleſſneſs of his own condition? If the depravity or violence of his appetites, his luſts, or his paſſions, have drawn him to commit any of the more notorious crimes that diſturb ſociety, or deſtroy his neighbour, conſcience generally interpoſes, and the ſting is felt, till the depraved wretch harden himſelf by ſome falſe excuſe, or, by ſome other criminal purſuit, draw away his attention from the ſore.

But, ſuppoſing a man, from the happy conſtitution with which he was born, from the advantage of a good education to form his ſentiments, or from the kind conduct of God's providence, free from thoſe groſſer offences that fall under the cenſure and diſtaſte of all honeſt men: can he recollect, that he is the creature of the infinitely perfect Being; that the great, the chief end of giving him all thoſe intellectual faculties that diſtinguiſh him from the reſt of the creation, was to contemplate the power, the wiſdom, the goodneſs of God, in his works and in his providence, and to admire,

adore, and ſerve this ſource of goodneſs, power, wiſdom, and perfection; that his diſtinguiſhing felicity lay in purſuing his duty, in anſwering the ends for which thoſe intellectual faculties were given; that a tribute of praiſe, of acknowledgement, and of thankfulneſs, is due to the God of nature, who has mercifully and beneficently framed the heart of man, ſo that the very act of paying this tribute is neceſſarily attended with the moſt perfect, pure joy, ſerenity and ſatisfaction, that the human mind is capable of feeling; I ſay, can he recollect theſe things, and at the ſame time be conſcious that he ſeldom, if ever, employs the talents given him, to the end for which they were given; that it is not the occupation of his mind, or the joy of his heart, to contemplate or acknowledge the divine wiſdom, and goodneſs; that the ſupreme good is not only not the object of the meditation of his mind, or of the purſuit of his heart, but that theſe faculties, and diſpoſitions, bountifully given for thoſe honourable and bleſſed ends, are monſtrouſly miſapplied to the purſuit of fleeting, periſhing, if not wicked, pleaſures; that the Soul is ſo knit to, and betwitched with, thoſe mean, unmanly, unreaſonable enjoyments, which end in ſmoke, if not in ſorrow, that there is no taſte left for thoſe ſublime, permanent pleaſures, for which it was created; and that, in place of uſing the very refuſe of one's time, what is over, and above the purſuit and enjoyment of thoſe vain comforts, to the chief end for which time was indulged, the thought of the leaſt communication with the Creator is ſo painful, that all amuſements, how fooliſh or inſignificant ſoever, are anxiouſly ſought after, to murder time, and to divert, as 'tis called, from that exerciſe of the ſoul, and heart, wherein conſiſts his indiſpenſible duty, and his higheſt felicity; without perceiving that he is guilty of high treaſon

ſon againſt *the God of* NATURE; that he is revolted from him, and has ſubſtituted in his place, and made choice of, his creatures for the object of his deſires, and of his purſuits; that they are become his maſters, who hold him in captivity; and he their ſlave, ſo chained to their drudgery, that he has no more capacity left to return to the enjoyment of his Maker, and to reliſh the pleaſures that are with him for evermore; without dreading the juſt vengeance of the Omnipotent, which may reach him here, and muſt reach him, unleſs reconciliation intervene, in the life to come; whither, he knows, the pleaſures and the amuſements of this life cannot follow him?

Whoever makes theſe reflexions, and every living ſoul muſt, who will enter into himſelf, and think ſeriouſly, can have no other queſtion to exerciſe his mind with, but, What ſhall he do to be ſaved? And if any accident ſhould bring to his ears that bleſſed piece of intelligence, that there is a way ſtill open to the favour of God, and means provided for the pardon of ſin, it is impoſſible the tidings ſhould not rouſe the whole of his Attention, and employ the utmoſt of his diligence to diſcover the truth of ſo acceptable news; which, if found to be the very will and revelation of God, muſt meet with the moſt joyful and thankful acceptance.

But, if men will not look ſo far into themſelves, as to ſee and feel their miſerable condition; if they are ſo well contented with the pleaſure they enjoy, or have in view, that they look for none other; or if their immerſion in ſenſual ſatisfactions prevents their entertaining thoſe honourable notions of the Deity, and of his ſervice, that are contradictory to their preſent purſuits and ſcheme of life; it is no wonder they ſhould not liſten with attention to a piece of information, which, if true, breaks in upon their preſent happineſs, ſours all their pleaſures, and promiſes,

promiſes, in exchange, an enjoyment for which they have no taſte.

Men, ſo minded, cannot poſſibly receive the GOSPEL, or fail to forge reaſons againſt it; whilſt thoſe who ſenſibly feel the want, muſt with the greateſt earneſtneſs wiſh they may, upon due examination, find it true.

The GOSPEL is an infallible CURE, a glorious MEDICINE, though of a bitter reliſh to many palates, for the moſt obſtinate, the moſt dangerous diſeaſe: A MEDICINE coveted, however, notwithſtanding its harſhneſs, and greedily ſwallowed by thoſe who feel the anguiſh of the diſeaſe, or dread the danger; but naufeated and rejected by thoſe who are ſenſible of no ailment, and believe themſelves to be in health. It is one of the hardeſt things in the world, to perſuade *Madmen* to come under the *regimen* neceſſary for their cure, becauſe it is impoſſible to convince them they are *mad*: a madman, however, can by violence be compelled to the taking of medicine; but the GOSPEL muſt be ſought after, and taken voluntarily, and wiſhfully, before it can do any good.

The whole want no PHYSICIAN, and thoſe who think themſelves ſo, believe they want none: It is otherwiſe with the ſick; who, in proportion as they feel agony, are impatient, and earneſt for relief.

They begin at the wrong end, who, to perſuade a DEIST to receive the GOSPEL, attempt firſt to prove the excellence and infallibility of it: If he is ſatisfied he has no occaſion for it, he cannot be brought to examine ſufficiently, and to weigh the proof. Convince a man, who diſlikes the only medicine that can cure him, that he is dangerouſly ill, he will hear you patiently on the ſubject of the remedy, and ſubmit to make uſe of it, be it ever ſo unpalatable; if you cannot convince

vince him that he ſtands in need of it, he is *incurable*.

As ſome men are ſo thoroughly corrupted, as to like the wretched ſtate in which they are, better than that, in the poſſeſſion wherof the higheſt felicity their nature is capable of conſiſts; they are ſo weak, and at the ſame time ſo conceited, as to think they can perſuade others, who do feel this miſery, and pant after relief, that they are in perfect health, and want no remedy; and, by doing ſo, expoſe themſelves to the pity, if not to the indignation, of thoſe who are conſcious of their own miſery, and with joy hope for relief from means that theſe men endeavour to traduce, and abuſe.

The whole of the DEIST's ſcheme is, as he imagines, built upon REASON; and, ſo far as right reaſon goes, the CHRISTIAN agrees with him: but the difference between them is this, The DEIST maintains, that nothing is to be admitted but what he can aſſign a proper reaſon for, or, in other words, what falls in with the ideas which he has, or has made for himſelf: whereas the *humble* CHRISTIAN believes that there are things of which he neither has, nor can have, adequate ideas; that things may be true, though he does not juſtly know how, or why, they are ſo; and that, for the reality and truth of ſuch things as do not depend upon reaſon, or fall within his knowledge, he muſt depend upon ſuch evidence as is ſufficient to induce the belief of any matter of fact.

When one conſiders how little we know of Matter, which we ſee, feel, and taſte, and on which we have tried ſo many thouſand EXPERIMENTS; how undeniably every ſyſtem, forged by the wit and induſtry of the greateſt GENIUSES, and believed for ſome time, has been overthrown by ſucceeding EXPERIMENTS; what amazing, nay ſeemingly contradictory effects the CHYMIST every

every day ſees produced in his *Laboratory*, by very ſimple mixtures; and how certain we are, that hitherto we, from our reaſon, have diſcovered nothing of the *firſt principles of* MOTION, and *that* MECHANISM which ſupports ourſelves and this ſyſtem: when one recollects, that we know nothing at all of the nature of our own ſoul, and are incapable of framing any idea of it, or of any other ſpirit; and when one reflects how infinitely above our comprehenſion the Deity muſt be: it is impoſſible not to be aſtoniſhed at the preſumptuous folly of thoſe men who would ſet up their knowledge for the ſtandard, and teſt, of every thing, divine and human; who by it would define the nature, and manner of exiſtence, of the incomprehenſible Deity; who by it would determine and regulate HIS views, HIS deſigns, HIS actions; and who by it take upon them to judge of the wiſdom and juſtice of HIS deſigns and actions, contrary to what HE has declared about them; though it is demonſtratively certain, that they cannot be ſure they know the cauſes of, or motives to thoſe deſigns or actions.

Ridiculous as this fond conceit of the ſufficiency of REASON and *human* KNOWLEDGE is, INFIDELITY finds in it one of its chief ſupports. Many facts are related, many things are *revealed*, that do not quadrate with the notions men have framed to themſelves, which they call knowledge. Each of theſe creates an objection, which the objector taking to be unanſwerable, does not give himſelf the trouble to look for an anſwer to; and the ſame weight is laid upon the points being inconſiſtent with his notions, or not accountable for by his knowledge, as if it was a manifeſt contradiction to right reaſon: though every one muſt ſee the difference between a contradiction *in terms*,

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an abſolute inconſiſtency in the thing itſelf, and an inconſiſtency between a thing, and the notions a man has framed on that ſubject, or even the incapacity of framing a diſtinct notion of the thing itſelf.

Vanity, ſelfiſhneſs, an affectation of gaining more knowledge than the Creator thought fit to allow, was the cauſe of the ruin of our firſt parents; and a falſe, preſumptuous opinion, of the ſufficiency and extent of the knowledge their deſcendents are poſſeſſed of, is the cauſe of their continuing in miſery to this day: Preferring knowledge, in expectation, to the favour of God undid the firſt rational creatures; ſetting up the OPINION of knowledge againſt the *revealed* WILL of God, faſtens the calamity upon their unhappy children.

It is however ſurpriſing, that men, who are ſo fond of, and lay ſo much ſtreſs on knowledge, are not more careful to lay up a ſufficient ſtock of it. A late noted writer againſt Chriſtianity gave himſelf the trouble to pick up ſo much *Hebrew* learning, as was, in his opinion, ſufficient to call in queſtion the application of a few particular paſſages of the *Old Teſtament* to the MESSIAH, and ſeemed to think that his labours had overthrown the whole evidence that ariſes from the *Old Teſtament* to ſupport the *New*; without knowing what a little more learning, and unbiaſſed attention would have ſhewed him; that the evidence does not depend on a few texts; that the whole ſyſtem of the *Jewiſh* inſtitution, every rite, ceremony, and ſacrifice, was predictive; and that the chief ſcope of all the *hymns* and *prophecies*, was to explain and apply thoſe predictions.

To frame a true notion of any thing, one muſt conſider it altogether, and examine all the parts of it; a juſt idea can never be got of any object by

by viewing only ſcraps of it, and conſidering it by halves.

So fares it with revelation, and the evidence of it. No man who has conſidered the whole with due care, and has thereby framed a true idea of it, ever did, or ever will reject it; whereas he who will frame an opinion from a partial conſideration only, can hardly fail to make a miſtake.

It has been taken notice of, as an objection of vaſt conſequence, againſt the evidence drawn from the *Old Teſtament* to ſupport the *New*, that all the promiſes and threats, to enforce obedience to the LAW, are every one *temporal*, relating to the goods and evils of this life, to the enjoyment or forfeiture of the land of *Canaan*, to proſperity or adverſity in this world, without the leaſt mixture of any conſideration that relates to the life to come; and thence it has been concluded, that the *Jews* had no expectation given them of future happineſs; that the *Sadducees*, who denied the reſurrection, found nothing to contradict them in their ſacred BOOKS; and that a religion, ſo framed, could not be intended to introduce or lead to the CHRISTIAN.

The obſervation which gives riſe to the objection, is undoubtedly true: the end of the whole of the *Jewiſh* inſtitution, ſacred and civil, was, ſufficiently to reveal, and preſerve to future generations ſufficient evidence of that REVELATION. The way choſen by the Deity to preſerve the evidence was, to ſelect a particular people; to make them all witneſſes of the miracles that demonſtrate the certainty of the revelation; to eſtabliſh among them ſuch obſervances, throughout all their generations, as ſhould commemorate and predict; to reduce his Will into writing, for the greater certainty; to give them the keeping of that writing; to lay before them the ſtrongeſt motives, that, as a people

a people or nation, they were capable of; to keep up unviolated these observances, and to preserve untouched his written will; to promise to give, and to keep them in possession of the land of *Canaan*, a land flowing with milk and honey; to engage to reside amongst them, and to direct and protect them from all harm, and to favour them with all national blessings; and to threaten them with all national ills if they failed in keeping his LAW, that is, preserving the evidence of his REVELATION.

And to make those motives the stronger, we see that the Deity was pleased to enter into a formal covenant with the whole people, as a PEOPLE, which bound him to the performance of all these articles; upon condition, however, that the people performed, on their part; and bound the people, absolutely, to the keeping and observance of his LAW, with a formal submission to the threatenings and denunciations of ruin and destruction, if they failed in the performance of their part, to which they explicitly consented, by pronouncing the curses against themselves if they disobeyed.

And, in fact, we observe that God performed, literally, his part of this agreement: With mighty power he introduced, and maintained, this people in possession of the promised land; he resided in the midst of them; he cherished them when they kept his LAW; and chastened them when they were remiss in his service; when their rulers their princes, and nobles, sought after other gods, and slighted his service, the NATION, as such, was delivered to slavery; when they returned in their hearts to their duty, they were restored to their land, and became again a NATION: but when they nationally corrupted themselves, forgot the end of the Law, framed to themselves unworthy notions

about

about their God, his REVELATION, and SALVATION, which by the whole law was predicted, and carried their perverse imaginations so high, as to put to death, as a malefactor, the DELIVERER of mankind; then God executed the threats, to which the people by covenant had agreed; he *dispersed* and *blinded* them; and, by preserving them still under that DISPERSION and BLINDNESS, preserves the evidence of the REVELATION as strongly and clearly, as it was preserved by them whilst a NATION, in possession of the promised land.

The COVENANT, then, with the people, was literal: all the promises annexed to the performance, on their part, were literal, and literally performed; the end the Deity had in making that COVENANT is obvious, and has manifestly been attained: but will it from thence follow, that the LAW itself, with all the *emblematical* rites, ceremonies, and institutions, had no higher meaning, did not speak a language very intelligible to every individual *Jew*, who had a soul to be saved, and who, from those divine institutions, was to discover the will of God, and conceive hopes of mercy and forgiveness; or that the *observing* and *meditating* on this LAW, so often recommended to every individual, was not necessarily to lead them to the knowledge of God, and to the expectation of his favour in a future state?

To satisfy one's self about this, no more is necessary than to look into the history, and the other sacred writings of the *Jews*; where the religious sentiments of inspired men, the declarations of the Deity, the professions, prayers, and confessions of the church, sufficiently shew what each individual was to see and believe, and what the wise and the devout did believe: Comparing the law with

with theſe things, one has a KEY to decypher the *typical* inſtitutions, and a certain explication of all that behoves us to know of the *Moſaick* inſtitution; and it will evidently appear that the *Moſaick* inſtitution, which is no more than a REPUBLICATION of the REVELATION and inſtitutions orignally given to *Adam*, together with the accounts he gives of things, contain a full diſcovery of all that MAN was to know, and to believe, concerning God, and himſelf, that was not diſcoverable by the *light of nature*, ſo much prized, and idolized *of late*.

If one, from the Reflexions already made, is ſatisfied that the LAW of *Moſes* is from God, and that the *Jewiſh* SCRIPTURES contain the REVELATION of the Will of the Deity, recorded and preſerved with ſuch induſtry and evidence, not for the ſake of the *Jews*, but for the ſake of all mankind, he muſt look upon them as an ineſtimable treaſure, ſtored with important truth; and cannot think any pains, beſtowed in peruſing and underſtanding them, loſt; or any thing from them diſcovered, to be trivial or doubtful.

A CYPHER is, in itſelf, obſcure; make uſe of the KEY, it becomes intelligible; and, if by ſo doing it becomes clear and intelligible, you are certain you have the right KEY.

The *ſcriptural* rites, inſtitutions, and ceremonies, are *emblematical*, and therefore, in ſome degree, obſcure, find out but a KEY, to explain the meaning of thoſe EMBLEMS, *that* ſhall make *all* ſenſe, and truth, and you are ſure your KEY is a true one.

The antients recorded their ſentiments, their actions, *hieroglyphically*, that is, *emblematically*, by figures of things animate or inanimate, expreſſive of their meaning; the KEY or DICTIONARY, if one may ſo term it, of thoſe EMBLEMS,

BLEMS, is now loſt; and, if it could be recovered, would certainly explain thoſe *Egyptian* antiquities ſtill preſerved. To us that ſort of writing is obſcure; but it was not ſo to the *Egyptians* who made uſe of it: and it can with as little reaſon be imagined, that the *emblematical* religious ſervice, inſtituted by God, was obſcure, or not perfectly underſtood by thoſe who were commanded to obſerve it, and for whoſe comfort and inſtruction it was eſtabliſhed; on the contrary, it could not anſwer the end, if it was not plain and intelligible.

It has been already obſerved, that all men are not alike ſagacious, and conſequently not alike qualified, for diſcovering, and knowing, their misfortune, their duty, their felicity; and that the REVELATION of the will of God, to be perfect, muſt be ſuch as ſhould accommodate itſelf to all, and tend to lead all to their duty; a conſequence whereof it is, that MEMORIALS ſhould be eſtabliſhed, even of things diſcoverable by the *light of Nature* by the *penetrating*, for the uſe of the leſs clear-ſighted, if reflexion on thoſe things was to be of univerſal uſe.

The SCRIPTURES are the moſt antient of all writings extant; the language in which they are wrote, is now no more, and has not for 2000 years been in common uſe; and there is not a line of that language now in being, but what is contained in the ſacred BOOKS.

Without the aſſiſtance of the *Greek* tranſlation, and ſome other paraphraſes, and helps from later languages, the *Hebrew* Scriptures, though in our hands, would be altogether uſeleſs to us.

And therefore we muſt reverence the divine providence, that made the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and the Diſperſion that followed upon it, which drove multitudes of the *Jews* into foreign countries, where

where they forgot their own, and learned the prevailing, the *Greek* language, the inſtrument or occaſion of procuring that tranſlation, by which we can certainly *decypher* the *Hebrew*, and come at the perfect knowledge of almoſt all the SCRIPTURE, at leaſt of ſo much of it as is neceſſary for the great End God had in view, the evidence of the truth of the REVELATION of his will to mankind.

As no other Book comes near to the SCRIPTURE, in point of antiquity, it is a diſadvantage to us that we do not preciſely know, further than we can collect from the *ſacred* BOOKS, the cuſtoms, the manners, the ſentiments, and common notions, that prevailed amongſt men, at the date of the ſeveral tranſactions related; and are therefore at a loſs to conceive, and diſtinctly to account for, the reaſon and meaning of ſeveral phraſes, directions, and obſervances, whilſt the ancients, to whom thoſe things were ſaid or delivered, well knew what they meant, and for what end they were recorded. But though we do not know exactly why the thing was ſo phraſed, or cannot tell, preciſely, the immediate origin of the particular inſtitution; yet, by comparing of texts, we can ſee evidently the general ſenſe of the phraſe, and collect the end of the INSTITUTION, ſo far as the knowledge of the one or the other is neceſſary to the great deſign of God: and therefore ought rather, with thankfulneſs, to acknowledge the goodneſs of God, who, through the midſt of ſo many difficulties, has preſerved to us all neceſſary knowledge, than repine at the loſs of that which would tend chiefly to gratify curioſity.

The higheſt act of religious ſervice in the *Jewiſh* church, and amongſt all mankind, was SACRIFICE, which, though in obſervance as early as *Adam*, was nevertheleſs re-eſtabliſhed by *Moſes*, with

with many particular poſitive injunctions, and many negative precepts; correcting abuſes that had crept into that INSTITUTION from the falſe notions of men.

It was common to all ſorts of SACRIFICE, that the BLOOD of the animal was ſpilt, and deemed of very high efficacy; and the whole body, or ſome part of it, that which was the moſt inflameable, the fat and the inwards, was burnt with fire on the altar.

This BLOOD is directed, carefully, and very early, to be abſtained from; it is ſaid to be the life of the animal; it is repreſented as what by the touch polluteth; and at the ſame time, it is repreſented as the moſt ſovereign *Purifier*: by it the altar, the ark, the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, the tabernacle, the prieſt, were ſanctified, were cleanſed, were hallowed.

The BURNT-OFFERING is properly termed *Aſcenſum*, from the parts of it aſcending in ſmoke by fire; the BLOOD is ſaid to atone, and the SMOKE to be of a ſweet ſavour, or a ſavour of reſt to the Lord.

The party who offered, was to lay his hands upon the head of the *Victim* ſacrificed for ſin, when it was to be killed.

And the very intent of the SIN-OFFERING was, to atone for the ſin a man came to the knowledge of, and confeſſed.

The Deity, conſidered as the puniſher of ſin, and as in a ſtate of anger and wrath againſt the guilty, is always repreſented under the image of *Fire*, a conſuming devouring *Fire*.

If God, then, to commemorate his declaration of mercy and pardon to mankind, and to preſerve and encourage their hopes, through the interceſſion of a Saviour, who was to be ſlain and bruiſed for their ſins, was pleaſed to direct, that an innocent

cent animal, to repreſent the great *Interceſſor*, ſhould be ſlain, and that for the ſins of him who brought it to the altar; that the *Blood* of it ſhould be *ſhed*, and *ſprinkled* upon the altar, and *poured out* at the foot thereof; that the carcaſs, or at leaſt the fat, the covering of the inwards, the moſt inflameable part of it, ſhould be committed to the ſacred fire, the emblem of the wrath of the Deity againſt him; and, being conſumed, thereby ſhould aſcend towards the heavens in *ſmoke*, which *ſmoke* is repreſented as a ſweet ſavour, or ſavour of reſt to *Jehovah*; and if man was told that this commemoration of the promiſed ſalvation was to atone for ſin, and procure favour: how could there be any doubt in his mind, that the *Victim* was only *typical*; that the virtue was really in the *thing typified*; that the *Blood* that ſanctified every thing, and atoned for ſin, was not the blood of the *Victim*; and that the *Smoke*, aſcending from the ſacrifice conſumed by fire, was *emblematical* only of ſomething elſe that was to aſcend, from the *typified Victim*, to propitiate, and reconcile God to the ſinner.

It cannot, with reaſon, be doubted that the merciful God, who inſtituted SACRIFICE for the comfort and inſtruction of mankind, communicated to him the *end* and meaning of the ſeveral appointments; and, being once diſcovered, the EMBLEMS are in themſelves ſo expreſſive, and the taking them in the literal ſenſe ſo abſurd, that it is no ſmall proof of the corruption of human nature, and the ſtrength of giddy IMAGINATION, that they ever came to be miſtaken, or miſapplied.

In SACRIFICE, which was daily to be repeated as the higheſt act of devotion, man had the ſtrongeſt *Memorandum* of his FALL; of the forfeiture thereby; of that life for which the BLOOD, the LIFE, of the VICTIM was to be ſhed; of the anger of God which muſt have conſumed him, if whatwas repreſented by the BURNT-OFFERING had

had not interpoſed; and of the excellency of the SACRIFICE typified, by whoſe oblation the Deity was placated and reconciled. Reflexions on this SYMBOLICAL act, and what clearly was intended by it, muſt put the mind in the moſt proper diſpoſition for acknowledging, praying, and praiſing.

And, therefore, beſides the daily, the weekly, the monthly, the yearly ſacrifices, at ſtated times, it pleaſed the Deity to direct the iteration of the ſame SYMBOLICAL act, when ever man, moved by reverence to the Deity, was deſirous to approach the place he choſe for his ſervice, in order to pray, to praiſe, or to rejoice, in his mercy, or favour. His peace-offerings were to be offered with gladneſs; and after the blood was ſhed, and the FAT burnt upon the altar, the party who made the offering was to feaſt on the remainder with Joy, in confidence of the favour of the Deity.

Nay, the perpetual obligation to abſtain from BLOOD, and the FAT of animals, ſlain even for private uſe, was a conſtant *Memorandum*, to ſuch as could not attend the publick ſervice, of their forfeiture, and of their reſtoration.

And the neceſſary oblation of the FIRST-FRUITS, and of ſamples of what the earth yields for our ſupport, in the regular meat and drink offerings, were ſo many memorials of what was to be with or in the great SACRIFICE, that it is ſurpriſing the meaning ſhould have been ſo much miſtaken as, in time, it came to be.

That the ſame INSTITUTION, not dependent on the publication of the LAW by *Moſes*, reached all nations, is evident from the antient and univerſal practice of all nations, with whom SACRIFICATURE was the higheſt act of devotion, thought ſufficient to expiate ſin, and to procure favour, and even fellowſhip with God.

The

The ancients of all nations ſhed BLOOD, and believed the virtue of it to be wonderful, witneſs their TAUROBOLIA, and their CRIOBOLIA; burnt the FAT, and ſometimes the whole VICTIM, on altars, with fire, and believed the ſmell grateful to the Deity; they offered FIRST-FRUITS; they poured out LIBATIONS; they burnt ſamples of the grain the earth afforded them; the SALT of the COVENANT was not wanting; they vowed SACRIFICE, and returned thanks by SACRIFICE; and in their PEACE-OFFERINGS they feaſted before their God on part of the victim, and rejoiced in his favour, and protection.

'Tis true, the greateſt part of them, ſuffering their IMAGINATIONS to miſlead them, forgot the expreſs prohibition not to eat BLOOD; but ſtill they retained the higheſt opinion of its efficacy. If they ate the BLOOD of ſacrifice it was to render them more perfect, and more acceptable; and if inſtead of ſprinkling the altar, they beſmeared their own bodies with BLOOD, they gave thereby the ſtronger evidence of the merit and virtue they imagined was in the blood they made that uſe of.

Beſides the VICTIM, another main ingredient in SACRIFICATURE was the PRIEST, the Perſon directed by God to approach his altar, and to make the oblation and atonement in the name of *Jehovah*, for the party offering.

The PRIESTHOOD, originally, reſided with the *firſt-born*; with whom alſo, amongſt the antient heathens, reſided the ROYALTY.

In *Iſrael* God exchanged, formally, the *firſt-born* for the *Levites*, and took the *Levites*, in their room, for the ſervice of the tabernacle.

Of the houſe of *Levi*, *Aaron* the *firſt-born*, was to be *High-Prieſt*, his ſons were to ſerve under

him in SACRIFICATURE, and the bulk of the *Levites* were for inferior ſervice only.

This *High-Prieſt* was to be perfect; he was to be conſecrated with BLOOD, and anointed with OIL; he was to be pure from all ſpot; he was, whilſt officiating, to be clothed with holy garments, all of linen; he had precious, and very particular robes and ornaments appointed for him. In the *Breaſt-plate of Judgment* he was to carry URIM and THUMMIM, LIGHT and PERFECTION, by which God gave reſponſes; on his heart, and on his ſhoulders, were the names of all the tribes of the people, engraved on a plate of pure gold, to be conſtantly, whilſt officiating, worn; on his fore-head was the inſcription, HOLY or HOLINESS *to Jehovah*. The Plate, with this inſcription, was ſaid to be upon his forehead, that he might bear the iniquities of the holy things, which the children of *Iſrael* ſhould hallow, in all their gifts, and that they might be accepted. This *Prieſt* was to ſprinkle the BLOOD; was to offer the BURNT-OFFERING; was to make atonement for ſin, and reconcile; was to enter, with BLOOD, once a year within the VAIL, into the SANCTUM SANCTORUM, the EMBLEM of the reſidence of the inviſible God; was to ſprinkle BLOOD upon the MERCY-SEAT; and was, when he came out, ſolemnly to bleſs the people.

Nothing can be more abſurd, than to ſuppoſe that *Aaron* was HOLINESS *to Jehovah*; that he was clean, and innocent; that he had in him light and perfection; that he ſupported the whole people of *Iſrael*; that he could effectually atone for, and intercede with God, for the people; or that he could enter into the real preſence of *Jehovah*, and from thence bring a bleſſing to the people; and conſequently nothing is plainer, than that,

that, in all theſe particulars, *Aaron* was no more than a *Repreſentative*.

If *Aaron* was to repreſent a *Perſon* pure and innocent, full of light and perfection, the holy One of *Jehovah*, who was to ſupport, and have for ever on his heart, the people of God; who was to offer blood, effectual, for cleanſing them from their ſins; was thereby to atone, and make continual interceſſion for them; was to enter into the immediate preſence of God, to propitiate for the people, and from thence to bleſs them: how could he do this otherwiſe than by waſhing his body with WATER, as the emblem of purity; by putting on *white linen* GARMENTS, as the EMBLEM of INNOCENCE; by carrying URIM and THUMMIM, i. e. *Light* and *Perfection*, ſomething by which the Deity manifeſted itſelf, about with him; by having the inſcription of the *holy one of Jehovah* faſtened to his fore-head; by having the names of the tribes of *Iſrael* on his heart, and on his ſhoulders; by ſprinkling the BLOOD for atonement; and offering the BURNT-SACRIFICE, that yielded a ſavour of reſt; and by entering in ſolemnly into the HOLY of HOLIES, the EMBLEM of the reſidence of the inviſible God, there again to ſprinkle BLOOD, and from thence, formally, to *bleſs* the people?

In the merciful act of the *Son of God* for the ſalvation of mankind, there are two parts; the PASSIVE, if one may ſo ſpeak, and the ACTIVE; the VICTIM bleeding and burnt repreſents the PASSIVE part: but then the great SACRIFICE was not compelled to ſuffer by the act of any one; the ſinner did not offer it; the SACRIFICE voluntarily offered itſelf; by doing ſo, atoned, and

continues ACTIVE in making interceſſion perpetually*.

The VICTIM bleeding, then, points out this PASSIVE part of the ſatisfaction; but the ACTIVE part, that which claims, ſo neceſſarily, the acknowledgement, and, adoration, of mankind, to that *benificent*, *bleſſed Being*, that offered the atonement, and makes interceſſion, would not have been pointed out in this *emblematical* act, unleſs ſome *thing*, or *perſon*, to repreſent him, acting in that capacity, had been fixed upon; *ſomething* adorned with the higheſt SYMBOLS of purity, ſanctity, and perfection, offering and interceding for mankind; and who can fail to ſee theſe characters in the *High-Prieſt?*

And therefore, as has been obſerved in the caſe of the VICTIM, no one, who believes the INSTITUTION divine, can doubt that the end and meaning of each particular was explained, when the obſervance was firſt appointed.

And whoever admits this, muſt alſo ſee that the original REVELATION was very clear, circumſtantiate, and diſtinct; and that the MEMORIALS inſtituted for preſerving the knowledge, then *revealed*, and maintaining the impreſſion of it on the ſpirits of men, were very expreſſive and ſignificative, and with great accuracy adjuſted to the ways of thinking of thoſe who recorded every thing intended to be known, by EMBLEMS, and SYMBOLICAL repreſentations; however ſome of the particulars may not be now clear to us, who know not the proper meaning of ſome of their SYMBOLS.

The aſſumption of the *Levites* in place of the *firſt-born*, is, viſibly, no older than *Moſes*; but it ſeems very clear the *firſt-born* were before that inſtitution,

* N. B. *Amongſt the heathen, when a* VICTIM *ſeemed reluctant, that was deemed a bad* OMEN.

inſtitution, in ſome ſenſe; what *Aaron* wore on the plate of the mitre, HOLY, or HOLINESS, *to Jehovah*; and were all, as repreſentatives of the great INTERCESSOR, intitled to ſhed BLOOD, and exerciſe the *Prieſtly* office, till the change was made, for very wiſe and juſt reaſons.

No more is recorded of the firſt promiſe, than that *The ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the head of the ſerpent*: So that it does not appear, from this text, to have been originally declared that the SAVIOUR was to proceed from a VIRGIN.

And, if that had been declared, it would have been difficult to have found out any *Repreſentation* fit to expreſs, and keep the memory of it.

Beſides, that the expectation of being the mother of that *Saviour* might have, with *believing* women, prevented marriage; as the ſame hopes promoted it among the *Iſraelites*, who looked for that *ſeed*, in the ordinary way; nay prompted ſome women to unlawful actions with men of *Line*, who they ſuppoſed had the promiſe of the Seed, as *Lot*'s daughters, *Tamar*, the *Midianitiſh* woman, *Bathſheba*, &c.

But we find the expectation of the promiſed Seed was confined to the *firſt-born*, that which *opened the womb*.

Primogeniture was reckoned after the mother; the *firſt-born* of a ſecond wife was intitled to the *rights* attending it, in prejudice of the ſecond ſon of a firſt wife, though born, in point of time, ever ſo long before him. *Vid.* 1 *Chron.* v. 1. 2.

And the right of *Primogeniture* was confined to the *male opening* the *womb*, ſo that, if a daughter came firſt, the right ceaſed in the ſubſequent ſons. It muſt have been for ſome very important end that God marked out this circumſtance of the *firſt-Born*, the *firſt that opened the womb*, with ſo

extraordinary characters; that, as the *firſt-born* amongſt men was to be holy to the Lord, and to officiate as *Prieſt*, or *Interceſſor*, the *firſt-born* among beaſts were alſo to be holy to the Lord; to be offered to him, if clean: if unclean, to be ranſomed.

Who, then, can doubt that the prerogative of PRIESTHOOD was annexed to the *firſt-born*, to keep in mind, and to point forth, that the great INTERCESSOR was to be a *firſt-born*; and that the *firſt-born*, in ever family, were choſen for the PRIRSTHOOD, as ſo many *Types*, or *ſymbolical* repreſentations of him?

At the firſt peopling, and, afterwards, at the repeopling of the earth, when men began to ſpread, and ſeparate into new ſettlements, it was neceſſary to keep up the ſervice of God, and the knowledge of his REVELATION, by the eſtabliſhed SYMBOLS; to have a *Prieſt* who could ſhed BLOOD, and make atonement, in every family. And it ſeems certain every family had its *Prieſt*, *(the firſt-born)*, its holy things, and all the appurtenances of religious ſervice.

When ambition joined many families into commonwealths, or kingdoms, and human prudence would make laws, this right of PRIESTHOOD could not fail to come under ſome regulations, different from the original INSTITUTION; though, for the firſt ages of the world, it remained ſtill in the higheſt eſteem.

When men, from their vain *imaginations*, began to miſtake, or miſinterpret the original REVELATION, and to deviſe new notions, and new ſervices, for themſelves, it became neceſſary to republiſh REVELATION, with all the marks of omnipotent power; and to prevent miſtakes for the future, it was fit to erect the *Jewiſh* ſtate, as above

bove hinted, and to give them the keeping of the LAW, and the obſervation of all the rites and ceremonies.

But, as this LAW could not poſſibly have been ſo accurately obſerved whilſt the PRIESTHOOD was executed, at large, by the *firſt-born* in every family, it pleaſed God to alter the original inſtitution, and to make choice of one particular tribe for his ſervice; and, out of that tribe, of the firſt-born and his deſcendants for ever to ſerve at the altar, and to repreſent the *High Firſt-born*, the great *Interceſſor* in all the *ſymbolical* ſervice that ſupported the knowledge, the faith, the hope of thoſe that feared God.

And, in the very order for changing the INSTITUTION, the knowledge of the *original Inſtitution* is preſerved; the *Levites* are ſaid to be taken in place of the *firſt-born*; and the regard for the *firſt-born* is ſtill preſerved, as holy to the Lord, by making it neceſſary to redeem them by an oblation; not to ſpeak of the prerogatives ſtill accruing to them by the *Jewiſh* civil conſtitution.

Though the *Jewiſh* law has a particular additional reaſon for the ſanctity of the *firſt-born*, to commemorate the delivery of their firſt-born from the common calamity of the firſt-born in *Egypt*; yet, by the proceeding of God towards the *Egyptian* firſt-born, it is evident the notion of their importance was ſtrong, before that event.

In the original meſſage which *Moſes* was to deliver from JEHOVAH to *Pharaoh*, *Iſrael* is called *his firſt-born*; and, if *Pharaoh* did not diſmiſs him, JEHOVAH was to ſlay *Pharaoh*'s firſt-born; and the ſame *Iſrael* is, afterwards, called *a nation of* PRIESTS.

When *Pharaoh*, hardened by his vain heart, and doubtleſs prompted by the *Prieſts* of thoſe gods whom he ſerved, refuſed to let the *firſt-born*, the *Prieſts* of JEHOVAH, go, the threat was *literally* executed; all his *firſt-born* were ſlain, and *the firſt-born* of *Iſral* were delivered.

If *Egypt* had hopes from their *firſt-born*, the threat was ſevere and the execution terrible; and we ſee it prevailed above all the other judgments, for the deliverance of *Iſrael*.

And that *Egypt* had hopes from their *firſt-born*, is very likely, from what appears to have been the practice, and opinion, of their neighbours; who burned to *Moloch*, and ſacrificed, on great exigences, their *firſt-born*, in hopes of placating the offended Deity: Whence could a practice ſo ſeemingly monſtrous come, but from the firſt promiſe miſunderſtood?

Eſau's ſelling his birth-right, the infamous character *that* brought him, the ſeemingly extraordinary ſteps his mother took, (when it is not obſerved that ſhe was directed by the *Oracle*), and the loſs of the bleſſings conſequent upon it, ſufficiently ſhew the high eſteem of *Primogeniture*, before the days of *Pharaoh*. And, indeed, the parting ſo cheap with a privilege ſo high, as repreſenting the *Interceſſor* between God and Man, gives a very vile idea of *Eſau*; if one can help calling him a *Free-thinker*, which he could hardly be, conſidering his concern for the bleſſing.

That *Prieſthood* and *Primogeniture* went antiently, together, we gather from prophane hiſtory:

Rex, Anius idem, Phœbique ſacerdos.

The *Lacedemonian* Kings were both *Prieſts* and *Kings*, becauſe it could not be decided which was

was *firſt-born*; and almoſt all the antient kings ſacrificed.

Whatever corruptions *imagination* introduced in religion, the *Prieſthood* was ever held in great honour. The original inſtitution was ſtrangely depraved in the *Roman* ſtate, but ſtill the *Prieſthood* continued to enjoy, at leaſt, its antient titles; the term of *Rex ſacrorum*, *Rex ſacrificulus*, went down through the *Roman* commonwealth, where the title of *Rex* was abominated. And the *Roman* Emperors, notwithſtanding their ignorance, and vanity of aſpiring after DEIFICATION for themſelves, yet affected the title of *Pontifex Maximus*, as an honour, and a ſecurity to their government.

The religious regard for SACRIFICATURE, and the reverence for the PRIESTHOOD, muſt have been ſtamped deep upon the minds of men, by a very extraordinary authority; elſe they could not have endured for ſo many generations, and amongſt nations ſo little converſant with each other.

Though *Rome* and the *Greek* commonwealths, eſtabliſhed on levelling principles, ſeem to have forgot that any prerogative at all was due to *Primogeniture*; yet it was not ſo with more northern nations, whoſe notions were leſs corrupted with *imaginations*. The *Goths*, the *Franks*, and the other people called *Barbarians*, who overthrow the *Roman* Empire, preſerved continually a regard for it, and have left large prerogatives attending upon it over all *Europe*.

As the original REVELATION, for the preſervation whereof thoſe rites, ceremonies, and obſervances, were inſtituted, diſcovered to man, in the ordinance of SACRIFICATURE, the chief foundation of his faith, and hope; ſo, it is

evident from other rites, obſervances, and ſymbols or emblems, conſtantly obſerved, and preſerved, that from the beginning man was taught his duty, what he was to do with reſpect to, and what he was to believe concerning the Deity.

Of this the univerſal practice of ABLUTION, or waſhing with water, is an inſtance which from the earlieſt times, has taken place over the whole known world.

The *Iſraelites*, before they received the LAW, were to waſh themſelves when they were to approach the preſence of God; all nations had their LUSTRATIONS, by ſprinkling of water; the *High-Prieſt*, and his ſons, were to waſh their fleſh, as often as they went about any part of the ſacred work; and the children of *Iſrael*, upon any uncleanneſs, were to waſh with water, in many caſes, with particular ceremonies.

Touching any filth or naſtineſs, a dead carcaſs of any kind, the ſore or iſſue of man, or woman, were ſaid to pollute, were ſufficient to debar the party from appearing before the Lord, who is deſcribed as abominating every thing that is unclean; and ABLUTION, with certain other obſervances, were ſufficient to put an end to that uncleanneſs, and to admit to the ſervice of God.

No man, in his ſenſe, can think that the external uncleanneſs of any perſon in the literal ſenſe, or the uncleanneſs, as one may ſay, by the touch of an unclean thing, could be offenſive to God; much leſs, that waſhing with water, conſidered as an external act only, could remove any real, internal uncleanneſs; and therefore it is impoſſible to doubt that both the one and the other ſignified ſomething more than is in the *letter* expreſſed.

Though,

Though, by the *Light of Nature*, we can diſcover that this creation had an author, eternal, infinitely perfect, and, particularly, infinitely juſt, good, wiſe, and intelligent; yet we, who can frame to ourſelves no adequate idea of our own ſouls, and who know nothing about them, but the little we collect from what we feel tranſacting in ourſelves, ought to be ſurpriſed, that, without REVELATION, we can frame to ourſelves no juſt notion of the inviſible God; but ought rather to be amazed at the impudence of thoſe who pretend to decide what God is, or is not, and what he can, or cannot do, from the notions they have framed to themſelves of his attributes, nature, and perfection.

The firſt hint we have in the *ſacred Book* that can help us to any notion of the Deity, is, that man was framed in his LIKENESS, and according to his image; from whence we may not only collect the intelligence of the Deity, which *Nature* ſufficiently diſcovers, but alſo inclinations, or diſpoſitions, in the divine mind, to which thoſe in the mind of man, in the ſtate of perfection, were ſomething ſimilar.

Diſliking, hatred, anger; liking, pleaſure in the actings of creatures, love, jealouſy, inclination reſtrained, compaſſion and concern, are affections which the *Wiſe-men* of this world hold the Deity incapable of, they look ſo like paſſions that cannot touch a Being infinitely perfect, and eſſentially happy; and in this reaſoning they agree with *Epicurus*, who rejected all providence, touching the things of this world, becauſe he looked upon the care it preſuppoſed to be troubleſome to the Deity.

But REVELATION differs from theſe *Wiſe-men*. It deſcribes the Deity as poſſeſſed of affections, and inclinations, ſimilar to thoſe that a perfect man:

man may feel in himſelf, and ſomething ſtill higher and peculiar to God: Deteſtation, hatred and abhorrence, of ſin; Anger, and wrath againſt the ſinner, as ſuch; Compaſſion towards the miſerable, and concern; Deſire, though ſometimes without ſucceſs, to ſave, and to reform; Love to thoſe that do well, ſatisfaction in their well-doing; Pleaſure in the acknowledgments, and praiſes, of thoſe benefited, and attention to their requeſts; as well as jealouſy, and indignation, at the ſetting up any *Rival* for acknowledgment and praiſe.

Now, if any man will give himſelf leave to conſider to what purpoſe God diſplayed ſo much wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, in the formation, and preſervation, of this whole material ſyſtem, of man, and of all other living creatures; to what purpoſe man had diſcerning and reaſon given him; to what purpoſe he had the ideas, and the law of right and wrong, imprinted on his mind; and to what purpoſe he had in his heart planted a diſpoſition to admire, to adore, to reverence, to acknowledge, to thank, and to praiſe; he cannot long be in ſuſpenſe between REVELATION and IMAGINATION, but muſt aſſent to the truth of what the Deity has revealed.

Did God exert infinite power, wiſdom, and goodneſs, in the creation of this world; did he give man eyes, and underſtanding, to ſee that wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, and a heart diſpoſed to admire, adore, and praiſe; and will it nevertheleſs be ſaid, that this admiration, and adoration, and praiſe, is indifferent to him? Muſt it not, neceſſarily, be concluded, that theſe things are well pleaſing to the Deity, and that the man who yields them is acceptable to him, ſtands in his favour, and good-will, and may be conſidered as beloved of him? And muſt it not, with equal certainty, be concluded, that the man who refuſes

fuſes to anſwer the end of his creation; who neglects to pay God that adoration, praiſe, and ſervice, that is due; who fixes his heart on the creature, in place of the Creator; and who gratifies thoſe luſts, and purſuits, he has ſet up in the room of God, at the expence of breaking the laws of right and wrong, implanted in his breaſt, is diſagreeable to God, the object of his anger, and indignation; and that his ſinful, treaſonable actions are offenſive to that Being that delights in right, in harmony, and in order?

Philoſophers may puzzle themſelves, and others, with reaſoning, from abſtract notions which they have framed to themſelves, as they think fit; they poſſibly may not ſee how a Being, infinitely and eſſentially perfect and happy, can admit of acceſſion to, or diminution from that happineſs: but their not being able perfectly to comprehend how this is ſo, will be no good reaſon to diſbelieve what the Deity declares concerning himſelf; or to perſuade that God is not pleaſed with the doing of his will, and diſpleaſed at doing the contrary.

And if we can bring ourſelves up to believe, that the infinitely perfect SPIRIT is pleaſed, and affected, with the rectitude of the ſpirits of men, with the ſentiments therein framed, and with the joy and gratitude that flows thence, in expreſſions of praiſe, acknowledgment, and adoration, we ſhall have ſmall ground to doubt (what the Deity formally reveals) that his SPIRIT acts reciprocally on men, that it enlightens, enlivens, and encourages them towards their duty, and felicity.

Nor is the ceſſation of miracles, for ſome centuries; or the obſervation, that nature follows, in all things falling under our cogniſance, a ſettled, fixed, mechanical courſe, purſuant to certain eſtabliſhed rules, any ground to doubt of the communication

communication between the infinite SPIRIT, and the ſpirits of men, which the Scripture ſays, is and ever has been open. The godly diſpoſition, the religious actings, of the ſoul, operate, as one may ſay, mechanically upon the Deity, producing ſatisfaction and complacency; and that, again, acts reciprocally upon the ſoul, by that ſort of mechaniſm, or manner of operation, by which ſpirit operates on ſpirit. Were the caſe not ſo, God would not have been delighted with prayers, and praiſes; he would not have commanded and encouraged them; and the duty of man, in the religious acts of the heart, inſtead of being a bleſſing and enjoyment, would be a burden to him.

We are ſo well acquainted with the perturbations, the tranſports, the ruffles, that pleaſures and paſſions produce in ourſelves, that we are unwilling to allow any ſuch affections in the Deity: But why muſt affections and inclinations produce ſuch diſturbances in the Deity as they do in us? May not God deteſt ſin, diſlike the ſinner, and even deſtroy him, without being ruffled, or ſuffering his eſſential happineſs to be impaired? May he not have affections and inclinations like to ours, without thoſe inconveniences that, in our weak frame, attend them?

God cannot be deſirous, ſays a *Reaſoner*, that any thing ſhould happen, and yet that thing not happen; becauſe, if he were truly deſirous, his OMNIPOTENCE would infallibly effect it. But, then, the *Reaſoner* does not conſider, that this deſire is only ſpoken of the diſpoſition, the inclination, of the Deity, and not of any formal act of the will. The inclination, the diſpoſition, may lie ſtrongly one way, and yet there may be inſuperable obſtacles that hinder to will what the mind inclines to.

A Prince

A Prince may have the ſtrongeſt inclination to pardon an offender convicted, ſuppoſe his favourite ſon, guilty of a crime of the higheſt nature, and moſt dangerous example, and yet reaſons of juſtice and polity may determine his will not to follow that inclination. In the ſame way, why may not the Deity be deſirous, and even ſolicitous, that a thing may happen, which, becauſe of higher conſiderations, he cannot interpoſe in, that is, cannot formally and abſolutely will ſhould happen.

Theſe reflexions and many more of the ſame kind, that muſt occur on reading the *Scriptures*, leave it very plain, that the language of that book, which deſcribes the Deity's actings, affections, and inclinations, in terms borrowed from the uſage, the ſentiments and reſolutions of men, is not ſo figurative as it is generally ſuppoſed to be; and that we ought to underſtand it ſomething more *literally* than *Reaſoners* are willing to allow.

In every page of the ſacred *Book* God inculcates his averſion to, and abhorrence of ſin, and his deteſtation of ſinners.

To give men ſome notion of this averſion, and diſlike, he borrows that idea of lothing and abhorrence that men feel on the ſight, or touch, of any naſty, unclean, lothſome object.

God repreſents himſelf *holy, pure, undefiled, ſeparated from ſinners, of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity.*

He repreſents ſin as uncleanneſs, pollution, lothſomeneſs, in the higheſt degree; and ſimilitudes are taken from many vile, impure, abominable things to deſcribe it.

And he repreſents the ſinner, as polluted by ſin, unclean, and therefore abhorred, and incapable to approach his PURITY, in that unclean ſtate.

But

But, then, as this picture, by itself, would be fit only to distract, and drive the sinner to despair; he, at the same time, represents a possibility of wiping away this pollution, and washing the sinner clean, by means very natural, and very easy to be come at.

To the end, therefore, that this image should be the more strongly impressed on mens minds, and the picture come the more frequently before their eyes, 't pleased God, at the first REVELATION of his will, and INSTITUTION of religious ceremonies and service, to direct a total abstinence from the touch of every thing that was, either in itself, or in the apprehension of mankind, unclean, foul, or lothsome.

It pleased God, also, to command the abstaining from several things that do not seem, in their own nature, to be unclean or lothsome; and to declare that, by the very contact of such things, men became impure, were unclean, and abominable in the eyes of God; and therefore could not be admitted into his holy *Presence*, or to any religious act.

But this impurity was to be purged away by *Ablution*, or asperſion, according to the prescription in the several cases: when the party was washed in water, and purified, he might present himself before God; but if, knowing his uncleanness, he mixed in the service of God without being purified, the offence was capital, he was to be cut off from his people.

This constitution must, necessarily, produce the greatest nicety and care to preserve cleanliness, in those who put any value on the favour and service of God.

And, if they were not so stupid as to look only to the *Letter*, the external act, it must for ever keep in their view the purity and holiness of God; the

the uglineſs and deformity of ſin, the abhorrence God had of it, and of the ſinner, the neceſſity of avoiding it, if one would have any communication with the Deity; and the mercy and goodneſs of God in providing a purification to cleanſe from it, ſuch as could as eaſily be come at as common water, and was as effectual to remove the filth of ſin, as water was for common naſtineſs.

The whole of this INSTITUTION, which was as antient and univerſal as ſacrifice, is obviouſly *ſymbolical* and inſtructive; and, if the real meaning of it was loſt, if men began to think there was any real impurity in the touch of a dead carcaſs, or any real virtue, to purge ſin, in water, it muſt be evidence of their utter degeneracy, blindneſs and corruption.

Perhaps, things not really impure, were to be avoided as ſuch, to create the greater circumſpection, and to bring the inſtruction oftener in view.

It is not reaſonable to think, that God ſhould injoin, or prohibit, in matters of religion, any thing in itſelf abſolutely indifferent, under ſevere penalties, purely to be a teſt of obedience.

But it is reaſonable to think, that a thing in itſelf indifferent may be commanded, to keep up the memory of any fact, or precept, to impart knowledge, and preſerve inſtruction.

Abſtaining from the altar after any external pollution, could not poſſibly have been injoined, under the pain of death, but for the important leſſon it was intended to teach, of the holineſs of God, and the purity of heart neceſſary to thoſe that would approach him.

Eating the fruit of the *tree of knowledge of good and evil*, would not have been prohibited, but to warn our firſt parents againſt the ambitious deſire of knowing more than came to their ſhare, and the

the preſumptuous conceit of relying on their own knowledge, and following their own *imaginations*, which deſtroyed them, and continues to miſlead and undo multitudes of their weak, vain deſcendents.

That ſpecies of Infidels that glories in the title of FREE-THINKERS, who ſet up their own knowledge and underſtanding againſt the *Revelation* of God, ſplit upon the ſame rock on which our firſt parents ſhipwrecked, notwithſtanding the *beacon* that has been fixed on it from the creation of the world.

Circumciſion may have ſerved for a mark of diſtinction to the *Iſraelites*, becauſe it was not practiſed by their neighbours in *Canaan*, though it was by the other deſcendents of *Abraham* and *Iaac*, *Iſhmael* and *Eſau*: But it had undoubtedly a higher meaning, and probably an origin earlier than the days of *Abraham*.

That it had a higher meaning, is certain from the frequent declarations that a *circumciſed* heart, a heart cut off and ſeparated from all unruly luſts, and affections, is what God delights in.

And that it had an earlier origin, ſeems to be very evident, from the early obſervance of that inſtitution, amongſt many nations who cannot be believed to have received it from *Abraham*, or his deſcendents.

Men may dream, but it is impoſſible to perſuade one that has his eyes open, and who reflects on the bitter animoſities that muſt have been between the *Egyptians* and the *Iſraelites*, the high contempt the former muſt have entertained of the latter, the vanity and tenaciouſneſs of the *Prieſts* of *Egypt* with reſpect to the myſteries of their religion, and the impiety and abomination which the religious ſervice of the *Iſraelites* appeared to them to be ſtuffed with, that the *Egyptian Prieſts* (and

(and they, principally, were in the earlieſt times *circumciſed)* would have ſubmitted to follow the deſpiſed, deteſted *Iſraelites* in a bloody practice of this kind, and would have tranſmitted it, as ſacred, to their deſcendents.

And, indeed, if it had been meant only for a ſign of diſtinction for *Iſrael*, it ought not to have deſcended to *Iſhmael*, and *Eſau*, but ought to have been confined to the twelve tribes.

It may, reaſonably, therefore be looked on as one of the original *Inſtitutions* appointed juſt after the FALL, which, though retained here and there, particularly in *Egypt*, had nevertheleſs been left off in *Abradam*'s country, where idolatry began to prevail; and was therefore renewed to *Abraham*, when he was ſelected, from his depraved country, to be the father of a people to whom the *original Revelation* ſhould be *republiſhed*, and who were to become the keepers of *the Oracles of God*.

Taking this, then, to be the caſe, and recollecting that *Eve* proved the tempter to *Adam*; that love to her, who had forfeited by eating, prevailed with him to follow her fate; that inclination to women is the moſt fierce, the moſt ungovernable of the deſires and luſts of men; and that it was fit to eſtabliſh ſome very ſenſible memorial of the offence at the *Fall*, that ſhould carry inſtruction along with it, to curb and bridle noxious deſires; who can help concluding, that *Circumciſion* was appointed to fix a permanent MARK on that part of the body, the gratification of the luſt whereof, had ſo great a ſhare in the ſeduction of mankind; and thereby to admoniſh againſt all luſts and carnal gratifications, and to adviſe and inſtruct men to cut off all ſenſual deſires, and to wean themſelves from them?

Lying

Lying carnally with woman, even with a man's own wife, than which nothing is more natural, or more innocent, is, in the eye of the LAW, a pollution, and required *Ablution*, before the party could be admitted to the *Preſence* of God. Why? to prevent the ſetting too high a value on it; to check the too fond deſire and purſuit of it; and to ſhew that ſuch deſires, encouraged, are inconſiſtent with that purity of heart that is required in the ſervice of God, who claims poſſeſſion of the whole heart, and will not admit of rivals. And, if this is the undeniable meaning of that prohibition, it is eaſy to ſee the ſenſe of the *ſymbolical* act of cutting off, and flinging away, the FORESKIN of the fleſh; than which nothing can be a more proper *Emblem* of forward, fierce, fleſhly appetites, and ſenſual delights.

Though *Circumciſion* might have been given to *Iſrael*, as a MARK to diſtinguiſh them from the other adjacent nations ſurrounding *Canaan*, and was by them to be conſidered as a *Mark* of the COVENANT between them and God; yet that does not ſay that the original intention, and *emblematical* uſe of it, was to be dropt, or loſt; on the contrary, it is evident, from the frequent alluſions plainly made to the *ſymbolical* ſenſe of it by the inſpired writers, that it was ſtill kept in view, and principally to be obſerved, by *Iſrael*.

And, in like manner, many of the *Inſtitutions*, which were in practice antiently, ſeem to be applied to particular actions or events which were near the time of the renewal of thoſe *Inſtitutions* in the *Jewiſh* LAW. But it does not follow from theſe applications, that the original *Inſtitutions*, or the ſenſe and meaning of them, were to be dropt or loſt. In an earthly affair, each *Iſraelite*, when he entered upon lands in *Canaan*, was to bring a baſket of fruit, and make a CONFESSION why he performed

performed that action: which proves that those *ſymbolical* acts had a formal meaning; and ſuggeſts that there may have been original, formal *Confeſſions*, acknowledgments, and prayers, attending the acts of Religion or Devotion; though, not being recorded, otherwiſe than in general, that once all the Earth had one *Confeſſion*, the particular Forms have not deſcended to us, with ſufficient Evidence.

Nothing is more unjuſt than the ſuggeſtion, that the obſervation of the SABBATH, or ſeventh day, was to take place only amongſt the *Iſraelites*.

If the *Scriptures* are to be the rule, *the Sabbath* had its origin immediately upon the Creation, and before the FALL. God is ſaid to have RESTED on the ſeventh day from his work, and to have *hallowed the ſabbath day*, on which it was criminal, nay capital, to do any work.

If the antient profane writers are to be ſearched, the *Sabbath* will be found ſo antient, that it could not poſſibly have been derived from the *Jewiſh Law*. For, not to take notice of the frequent mention to be met with of *Sabbaths*, and days of reſt, which might have been borrowed from *Jewiſh* cuſtoms, it is certain that the moſt antient *Greeks*, and the more antient *Egyptians*, divided the time by HEBDOMADES, a circle or revolution of ſeven days, to each of which they gave the name of ſome planet, except the ſeventh, which they dedicated to the ſovereign of all the heavenly luminaries, the SUN; and this CYCLE being no proper, conſtituent part of the moon, month, or year, muſt neceſſarily have flowed from *Inſtitution:* Nor could any thing be a more proper, permanent Memorial of the Creation, than the appointing the obſervation of the ſeventh day; at the ſame time that, debarring man from work, it ſequeſtred him to the contemplation of the Creation, and its Creator, ſo

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Formation and its Former, and allowed his ſoul time to entertain itſelf with objects peculiarly fitted for it.

If every ſeventh day man was to be ſtopped in his career, in purſuit of low, earthly comforts, by a holy reſt, which it was capital to profane by labour; if he was to obſerve this reſt, week after week, in memory of God's having reſted the ſeventh day, after having finiſhed the creation in ſix: no means could be deviſed more likely to keep up the memory of the creation, and to baniſh the extravagant *Imagination* that the world was eternal; and no *Inſtitution* could lead more neceſſarily, and directly, to employ man, at leaſt one ſeventh part of his time, in thoſe ſpeculations that tend to keep up communication between the ſoul and the Deity, and preſerve the memory and knowledge of the *Revelation* of God to man; nor could man have been guilty of a more fatal piece of perverſeneſs than to diſcontinue and leave off the obſervance, which, in all appearance, drew along with it the loſs of the true ſenſe and meaning of all the other *Inſtitutions*. It is one of the reproaches the moſt inſiſted on againſt the backſliding *Iſraelites*, that *they neglected the ſabbaths of the Lord*.

In the whole of the primitive religious ſervice, there is not any circumſtance caſual; every particular, every geſture is inſtructive.

In the PRESENCE of God man fell upon his face to the ground; and, by that act, humbly confeſſed his ORIGINAL: hence, bowing to the ground is the formal word for worſhipping, which it was high treaſon to practiſe toward any idol. And when, from that poſture, man raiſed himſelf to praiſe, and to bleſs God, he raiſed himſelf no farther than the knee, ſtill ſo far retaining the poſture of humility; and from this poſture the word to ſignify *Bleſſing* is taken; as *bowing to the ground* is uſed

uſed to ſignify *worſhipping*, *kneeling* is uſed to ſignify *bleſſing*.

If *the original Revelation* was compleat, man muſt have been told that the Deity was to deſcend to this earth, to dwell there amongſt men, and to inſtruct by precept and example.

If this was *originally revealed*, it muſt have been recorded, by appointing ſome *ſymbolical* obſervance, ſome *emblematical* repreſentation.

Accordingly, in *the Republication of the Law* to the *Iſraelites*, the appointment the moſt remarkable was, to erect, firſt a tabernacle, and then a temple, for the reception of the *Preſence* of the Deity; who made repeated declarations, that he was to dwell in the midſt of the children of *Iſrael*, that he was to reſide, in the tabernacle firſt, and then in the houſe that was to be built for him, and was more particularly to reſide between the CHERUBIMS.

And, the tabernacle firſt, and then the temple, having been built, *a Cloud*, *the Glory of the Lord*, or *the ſymbol of his preſence*, filled theſe manſions, and the Deity from thence gave reſponſes, and directions, and pronounced Judgments.

In the ſacred writings there are many formal intimations that this *Inſtitution*, and diſpenſation, amongſt the *Jews*, was *typical*, and predictive that the real GLORY of the Lord was to come to the temple; that the temple, the *ſymbol* of his manſion, was to be deſtroyed; and that the figurative, the *emblematical* ſervice, and *Inſtitution*, was to ceaſe, and to give way to the real *Preſence*, and ſpiritual inſtruction of the Deity.

And, indeed, by the ceſſation of all that ſervice, and by the deſtruction of the temple, immediately after the Lord who was expected came to it, we evidently ſee the *Inſtitution* could have been to no other

other end but to create, and keep up, that expectation.

But, if we look a little farther back, we ſhall ſee the belief of God's reſidence among men, and the practice of building tabernacles, and houſes or temples, for that reſidence, much earlier than *the republication of the Law* from *Sinai*.

Moſt of the antient nations had temples, dedicated, for the ſuppoſed reſidence of their gods. The *Philiſtines* had a houſe for *Dagon*, before the *Iſraelites* had any for JEHOVAH; and many cities in *Canaan* are named from the temples of the deities worſhipped by the inhabitants.

Jacob promiſed to make the ſtone which he anointed at *Luz*, *Beth-el*, the houſe of God: and he was as good as his word; for, ſome years after, he there built an altar, and ſacrificed.

The *Iſraelites*, upon their going out of *Egypt*, before the *Moſaick* tabernacle was built, had a tabernacle in which they believed the *Preſence* of God to be, and in which the pot of *Manna*, *&c.* was laid up.

The idolaters, who came up amongſt the *Iſraelites*, are reproached with having carried in the wilderneſs the tabernacles of their gods, whilſt the living God was ſo miraculouſly feeding, and protecting them.

This Practice, which could not poſſibly have come from the *Law* of *Moſes*, but which the *Law* of *Moſes*, as well as the uſage of *Jacob*, and of the *Iſraelites*, ſhews to have been approved of by God, muſt neceſſarily have flowed from divine *Inſtitution*, as early as the original *Revelation*; and was perfectly well calculated to keep in mind the original intimation, that God was to humble himſelf ſo far as to deſcend to dwell amongſt men, and to create a conſtant expectation of that event.

And,

And, as we have already obſerved on other occaſions, if this practice had not had ſome very authentick inſtitution for its original, it is ſcarce poſſible it ever ſhould have univerſally obtained; nothing being more contradictory to the common notions which the *light of nature* could afford, than the belief that the immaterial, incomprehenſible Being ſhould dwell in houſes made by hands, and ſojourn with ſuch groveling creatures as man. The univerſal practice, then, in this inſtance, is ſtrong evidence that it does not depend upon human invention. *Imagination*, indeed, would miſlead from the intention of the *Inſtitution*, and would graft many impertinencies on it, whenever the real deſign was miſtaken; but there is hardly any example of an obſervance, ſo ſeemingly unnatural as this, if univerſal, that cannot be traced up to a divine original, at leaſt to ſome divine intimation, or *inſtitution*, that gave occaſion to it.

As the *Inſtitution* we are now upon, was of a very high nature, and important to be obſerved, and relied on, it is extremely probable that the Deity, to devout men, (for to ſuch, we know from Scripture, God was pleaſed to reveal himſelf), thought fit to give particular proofs of his *Preſence* in the houſe, tabernacle, or place appointed for his reſidence. He ſpoke to *Moſes* from the tabernacle of the congregation, before the *Moſaick* tabernacle was erected: And if thoſe temples, or tabernacles, were ſo honoured on particular occaſions, we may ceaſe to wonder why the *Gentiles* took up the belief of *Oracular* reſponſes from their deities, (which, again, is a conceit they hardly could have taken up without precedent). Knowing that the true God reveal'd his will to his true ſervants, in thoſe places which he authoriſed to be ſet aſide as for his *Preſence*, and believing their falſe gods true, and themſelves acceptable ſervants,

they naturally would expect such communications; and their *Imaginations* might impose on them, or make their belief an easy prey to any impostor, any *Priest* of a false god, who should have courage and cunning enough to frame a lie.

When we see an observance has, universally, prevailed amongst the heathens, which is afterwards approved of by the *Law* of *Moses*, we justly conclude it sprung from divine authority.

When we see customs, obtaining among the early heathens, which are prohibited by the *Law*, we may safely conclude that those customs were not of divine *Institution*, but were derived either from some laudable, pious practice of the believing *Patriarchs*, which had been abused, or from *Imagination*.

Thus we see the respect among the earliest *Syrian* and *Greek* heathens for BAITULIA, stones which were set up on end, anointed, and believed to be sacred, and in process of time transferred to their temples, and revered as statues of their gods.

And we cannot avoid seeing the practice of consecrating, as we say, a stone by *Jacob*, when, upon the manifestation of the Deity, he set it up, poured oil upon it, vowed a vow, and said it should be BETH-EL, the house of God.

But, however, that devout act, that solemn memorial of *Jacob*'s vow, and of the merciful appearance to him, might have been acceptable to God; and however such things might have been religiously, and acceptably, done by other pious men, before and after him; yet we see the practice is in the *Law* prohibited, perhaps because of its being liable to abuse, and because of the corruptions it had already introduced.

We see, also, that the *Patriarchs* shewed particular, sacred respect to some sort of trees. The *Oaks* of *Mamre* were, in some degree, sacred to *Abraham*

Abraham. It is not impoſſible they might have made ſome ſpecies of trees *Memorials*, to the end they might think on the thing ſuch tree repreſented, ſo often as the tree came in their view. *Abraham* planted a *Grove*, or Tree, at *Beerſheba*, and called there on the name of *Jehovah*, *the everlaſting God*. Many of theſe *emblematical trees*, put together, might form *groves*; and we do know that *groves* were amongſt the moſt antient places of Worſhip, amongſt the Nations; and that particular ſorts of trees were held ſacred to certain deities, amongſt thoſe that had forgot, or rather miſapplied, the ſervice of the true God.

Theſe obſervances continued to be reverenced as late as *Homer*: *Hector* wiſhes for a Stone, or an *Oak* Tree, from whence he might with ſafety ſpeak to *Achilles*; and *loqui a quercu* is, in the language of the old *Italians*, *to ſpeak with ſafety*.

Amongſt the things which were abuſed, and, by *the renewal* or *Jewiſh inſtitution*, were prohibited, ordered to be diſcontinued, cut down, and deſtroyed, the *Jews* have taken in ſacred Trees, or *Groves*: But, it appears, the word which they conſtrue *Groves*, ſignifies images of *Venus*, or *&c.* and it appears that they uſed ſacred Trees, and *Groves*, to the laſt.

There is another inſtance of the ſame kind, in the caſe of what we tranſlate ORNAMENTS. The original notion of the word carries in it the idea of *witneſſing*, *teſtifying*, &c.; and ſome paſſages of the ſcriptures ſeem to point at a very ſurpriſing regard ſhewed by the Deity to thoſe *ornaments*. After the defection in making the golden calf, God commands the people, by *Moſes*, *Exod.* xxxiii. 4. 5. 6. to put off their ornaments from them, that he might know what to do unto them. And the people put off their *ornaments*, and mourned. We cannot doubt, then, that the people looked upon

thoſe *ornaments* as defences againſt any ſudden miſchiefs, or unlucky caſualties; and that this opinion had ſome authority from the conduct of the Deity, in providence, and from the practice of godly men, if not even from divine *inſtitution*; and to this early obſervance are owing all the *Amulets*, all the *Taliſmans*, the *Annuli*, amongſt the antients, which they looked upon as *averruncating* of evil, and as ſo many defences and preſervatives from harm.

Though we know nothing of the *Ornaments* of the *Iſraelites*, yet, looking upon the antient *Taliſmans*, the *Abraxes*, the *Annuli*, and other gems, that are ſtill preſerved, which are full of inſcriptions, and *hieroglyphical* figures, of which we can make no certain ſenſe, at this day; we may naturally conclude, that the earlieſt *ornaments*, which had the virtue the latter were only ſuppoſed to have, were formed ſomewhat in the ſame way; and that the *hieroglyphical* figures, with which they were charged, repreſented ſome ſacred diſcoveries, or promiſes, worn on certain parts of the body, to be perpetual *memorandums* of the propoſitions expreſſed in thoſe *emblems*.

And, accordingly, when the *Law* was given, by *Moſes*, in *writing*, in the room of that preſerved, formerly, by *hieroglyphicks*, we ſee injunctions that the people ſhould wear the *Law*, or parts of it, as *Signs* upon their hands, and for *Frontlets* between their eyes, *Deut.* vi. 8.; which the later *Jews* underſtanding *literally*, wrote paſſages, as they conceived the moſt remarkable, of the *Law* on vellum, which they rolled up in *Phylacteries*, and wore on their arms, and foreheads, with a ſuperſtitious regard, in the days of Chriſt; and it is for the oſtentatious, hypocritical uſe of them, *making broad their Phylacteries*, the *Phariſees* are reproved, *Matth.* xxiii. 5. and not for their being at all uſed,

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as ſome ſuppoſe; which ſhews that the wearing thoſe *Signs* and *Frontlets* was *literally*, and not in a *figurative* ſenſe only, injoined.

If we obſerve the paſſages of the LAW of *Moſes*, in which the wearing thoſe *Signs* and *Frontlets* is recommended, we ſhall find them exceeding important; and that the intent of the recommendation is, to keep, for ever, and attentively, in memory, the particular tranſaction or declaration to which they relate, by way of evidence that ſuch a tranſaction happened, or ſuch a declaration was made; and in this light they agree with the ſenſe of the word we tranſlate *Ornaments*, which implies, *bearing evidence*, *teſtifying*: and, if the meaning of this later INSTITUTION was to inculcate, by written *Memorandums*, the important paſſages of the LAW, or the *Jewiſh* œconomy, it is very natural to think that the end of thoſe *Hieroglyphical Ornaments*, in uſe before the *written Law*, was of the ſame nature, to preſent frequently to mens view the moſt ſignal articles of the *original Revelation*.

Men who have not ſufficiently inquired, may make it an objection to the goodneſs of God, with an intent to impeach the truth of the *Chriſtian* religion, that the world, on the ſuppoſition of the *Chriſtian* ſcheme, was ſuffered to lie ſo long in darkneſs; that the *Judaick* religion was confined, and hidden, in myſteries; and that the *Chriſtian* religion came too late, and attended with too ſlender evidence: but, after giving due attention to theſe hints, they muſt confeſs the original publication of the *revealed will* of God, full, and perfect; that inſtructive leſſons were conveyed in every *Rite*, *Ceremony*, *Obſervance* and *Inſtitution*; that the ſtrongeſt *Memorials* were eſtabliſhed of what was declared, was to be believed, and hoped for; that perpetual *Memorandums* were appointed for

bringing into mens minds their duty, and ſtrengthening their belief, and their hopes; and that this knowledge, thoſe inſtitutions, and theſe hopes, reached over the bulk of mankind, before *the renewal of the Law* to *Iſrael*; though mankind ſo corrupted themſelves, ſo cooled and ſlackened in their duty, and purſued ſo wantonly, and preſumptuouſly, their own *imaginations*, as to have loſt almoſt all the knowledge of the things *revealed*, and of the end and deſign of the *Inſtitutions*; and to have preſerved no more than ſome great lines of external obſervances; which ſerve at this day for evidence, only, that there was a very early REVELATION of the will of God to mankind, joined with hopes of mercy; but do not ſhew what the particulars were of that REVELATION, which can be gathered, only, from conſidering the ſacred *Inſtitution*, as it is delivered, compleatly, in the LAW, explained by the PROPHETS, and perfected by the GOSPEL.

But, after all, though in the *Inſtitutions* already referred to, one may ſee, very diſtinctly, almoſt all the articles of the *Chriſtian* faith, and hope; yet, if the original REVELATION went no farther, it muſt be owned there are ſome great points wanting, ſomething diſcloſed in the GOSPEL, relating to the Deity, that the declarations and *inſtitutions*, hitherto mentioned, do not extend to, and that the *light of Nature*, by itſelf, could not diſcover.

The *Goſpel* informs, preciſely and formally, That though the Godhead is eſſentially *one*, yet there are in the divine eſſence *three Perſons*, equal in perfection, the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit*; that the *Son*, to ſatisfy eſſential juſtice, took on him fleſh, was united to the humanity, ſuffered for ſinners, made atonement for them, raiſed the *Man*, to whom he was joined, from the dead, glorified him with himſelf, and is to make

continual

continual interceſſion for ſinners; and that the *Holy Spirit*, upon the aſcenſion of the *Son of God*, was ſent to inſtruct, to comfort, and, as one may ſay, to inſpire all who, believing in *Jeſus Chriſt*, ſhould endeavour to do their duty, to ſerve, and to glorify God.

That this is true, every *Chriſtian* believes; and whoever does ſo, feels the expediency of being acquainted with it, as it exalts his ſentiments of the wiſdom, the juſtice, the mercy, the goodneſs, the love, of God; and lets him know how to place his acknowledgment, his ſervice, his adoration, at the ſame time that it cautions him againſt thoſe ſins and abuſes that can be waſhed away no other ways than by the blood of the *Son of God*.

And, as this is true, and highly neceſſary to be known, it would not be of a piece with the reſt of the tenor of the goodneſs and condeſcenſion of the Deity, if, in *the original Revelation* of Grace, this was not alſo intimated to mankind, however the perverſity and preſumption of human *imagination*, and invention, may have confounded, and thereby, in a great meaſure, have loſt the *Memorials* inſtituted for preſerving this REVELATION.

It will be granted by every *Free-thinker*, becauſe it is the foundation of his own belief, or rather unbelief, that, conſulting nature, *Unity* is eſſential to the Deity, and that nothing is leſs deducible from *the Light of Nature* than a *Plurality* of Deities; nay, that a *Plurality*, in the common ſenſe, is inconſiſtent with it, and therefore impoſſible.

It is, at the ſame time, true in fact, that all the antient nations entered readily into the belief of a *Plurality* of Deities, how contrary ſoever the opinion might be to *the Light of Nature*; and continued in that faith till Chriſtianity beat them out of it.

One would not infer from this, that *Polytheiſm* was an article of *the original Revelation*, becauſe we ſee the heathens graſted many miſtaken imaginations upon what was originally revealed; but it ſeems to be a fair concluſion, that ſomething, concerning the Deity, not diſcoverable by *the Light of Nature*, and ſeemingly diſſonant to it, was *originally revealed*, from whence this falſe but univerſal opinion took its birth: and, if the doctrine of the *Trinity* was originally promulgated, and believed, it is eaſy to ſee how it might degenerate into POLYTHEISM, as the Chriſtian TRINITY ran the hazard of doing.

If this reflexion is candidly weighed; if one conſiders, that the firſt teacher of *Polytheiſm* could not poſſibly deduce his doctrine from *reaſon*, but muſt neceſſarily ſupport it from authority; and if one then inquires what degree of authority would be ſufficient to draw all mankind into the ſettled belief of this monſtrous propoſition, or indeed of any thing a-kin to it, from which this, by *imagination* or deduction, can be derived, he muſt needs conclude the authority muſt be, at leaſt believed, divine, before reaſonable creatures could give credit to it, and could be brought to ſpeak of, and make their addreſſes to *Gods* in the plural number.

It is impoſſible to make this reflexion without joining to it, what has been already obſerved, that the word ELOHIM, uſed in the *Hebrew* Scriptures to ſignify God, is plural; owned by all to be ſuch, and particularly by the *Jews*, who have the idea of plurality in the higheſt contempt, and who make in their tranſlations a very ridiculous diſtinction, rendering the ſame ſpecifick word, when, as they apprehend, it relates to the true God, *ſingular*, but *plural*, *Dii*, *Gods*, when it relates to the objects of the Pagan worſhip.

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This reflexion is the more important, that the word ELOHIM has confeſſedly a ſingular, ELAH, uſed ſometimes, but not often, in ſcripture. Now, when the ſacred writers make uſe almoſt always of the plural word, not from neceſſity, but from choice, it is hardly poſſible to believe that this choice is altogether without meaning, and that a word, fit not to inform, but to miſlead, was employed by the Deity, in the written inſtructions given to mankind.

The *Jews*, and with them thoſe pretended *Chriſtians* who reject the *Trinity*, as well as ſome who admit it, but are loth to lay much ſtreſs on the idiom of a language they do not give themſelves the trouble to underſtand, ſtrive to invalidate this obſervation, by ſuggeſting that the plural may be uſed *honoris cauſa*, as Princes, in our days, expreſs themſelves, WE and OUR, and perſons of condition, ſpoken to, are addreſſed by pronouns in the plural number.

But, not to inſiſt on what is moſt certain truth, that the ſcripture language is, in every other inſtance, oppoſite to this ſuggeſtion, conſtantly uſing the ſingular when *Jehovah* ſpeaks of himſelf, and moſt frequently joining verbs and pronouns in the ſingular number to the plural ELOHIM; there are many caſes in which the expreſſion cannot poſſibly be reconciled to this *Jewiſh* pretence, of which this may be an example, *Gen* iii. 22. *And Jehovah Elohim ſaid, Behold, the man is become like one of us, to know good and evil.* Here the expreſſion is diſtinct, and unambiguous, and not to be twiſted to the *Jewiſh* conſtruction, by any force of figure, or example: *One of us*, neceſſarily implies more than *one*: and the *Jews* and their followers are ſo ſenſible of it, that they pretend *Jehovah* is here ſpeaking with and to the Angels, bringing them on the level with himſelf; which he no where elſe in

the ſcripture does, and which there is no reaſon to ſuppoſe he does in this place, though it did not imply an abſurdity; becauſe the plural word ELOHIM preceding, ſufficiently ſhews who the Us were, and forbids the application of that pronoun to any other ſet of beings.

As this text affords a demonſtration, in its own kind, that the plural ELOHIM is not uſed by chance, but is the fruit of choice, and ſignificative, care is taken in ſcripture to prevent the grafting the notion of POLYTHEISM on an expreſſion that might lead ſo naturally to it.

And therefore, *Deut.* vi. 4. the great command which Chriſt, being interrogated, declared to be the firſt and higheſt of the *Law*, and which was directed to be laid up in the hearts of the *Iſraelites*, to be taught to their children, to be worn as *ſigns* upon their hands, and as *frontlets* between their eyes, and to be written on the poſts of their houſes, and on their gates, is uſhered in with this remarkable admonition, *Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord*; in the original, *Hear, O Iſrael, Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah.*

The word *Jehôvah* is agreed by all to be the proper name or term for expreſſing the eſſence of the Deity; it is derived from the verb that ſignifies *to be*, and therefore imports, *being*, *exiſtence*, ὁ ὤν, he who *is*, who *exiſts*, *neceſſarily*.

This noun is ſingular, and knows no plural; wherefore there would be very little occaſion for the declaration, that *Jehovah* is *one*, is not plural, if it were not for the plural word ELOHIM, which might lead into a miſtake; to prevent which, the declaration was neceſſary, that though in *Jehovah* there were more ELAHS than *one*, yet theſe different ELOHIM were but one *Jehovah*, *one* neceſſarily exiſtent *Eſſence*; which is allowing a plurality, not of diſtinct Deities, but of diſtinct ELOHIM

HIM in the ſame *Eſſence*, Godhead, in *Jehovah*, who is *one*.

On occaſion of mentioning the word *Jehovah*, the proper name or term uſed to ſignify the eternal, the neceſſarily exiſting Being, the cauſe and author of all other Being, it may not be improper to obſerve, that this name is of the higheſt antiquity, coeval in all appearance with the *original Revelation*, and given by the Deity, to expreſs that grand character of his own nature, which *modern Wiſe-men* value themſelves on having, as they imagine, diſcovered from *nature*, and *reaſon*.

For, not to mention the authority of *Moſes*, who makes uſe of that name juſt after deſcribing the creation, it appears not to have been unknown to the antients, though they loſt the ſenſe of it, and confounded themſelves with new names for their fictitious Divinities. The oracle in *Macrobius* declares *Jauo* to be the chief God; whence it is plain at leaſt that the ſound was known by thoſe who conſulted. The *Zeus* of the *Greeks*, was in all appearance from the ſame ſource; and the *Jupiter* of the *Romans* confeſſes more clearly that original: Antiently *Jupiter* was written and ſounded *Jovis pater*; *Jovis* was the nominative, or, more properly, *Jehovah* with the Latin *-is* for a termination in all caſes, and *Jovis pater* became by corruption, in length of time, *Jupiter*, though it retained more of the original ſound in the *genitive*, and the other *caſes*.

Now, though the *Roman* people and religion were but modern, compared with that of ſome other nations, yet is their *Jovis pater*, which took much time to be corrupted into *Jupiter*, very antient; and, if they had their THEOLOGY from the *Hetruſcans*, or from the *Phœnicians*, the term *Jehovah* muſt have been very pure and diſtinct, when it came firſt into *Italy*, to have remained ſo long

long ſo uncorrupted, as we ſee it did. No man, in his ſenſes, will think the antient *Greeks*, and *Italians*, borrowed from the deteſted *Jews* the name of their God; and therefore it may be ſafely concluded, that the name which travelled thus into *Greece* and *Italy*, in the earlieſt times, was the name of the God of the whole earth, uſed and honoured by all fleſh.

But, to return to the idea of the Deity given by *revelation*, though the *unity* of *Jehovah* is expreſsly ſettled, yet it is manifeſt from great numbers of texts, that there are different *perſons*, different *agents*, in this eſſence, that have different characters, and are to be conſidered differently by men.

Beſides *Jehovah*, who, by way of diſtinction, may be called the *firſt Perſon*, or the *Father*, in the language well known to all Chriſtians, there is *the Name of Jehovah*, or *the Name Jehovah*, *the Word of Jehovah*, or *the Word Jehovah*, and *the Angel of Jehovah*, or *the Angel Jehovah*, with ſeveral other terms, all applicable to the *ſecond Perſon*, or the *Son*, by the circumſtances of the ſeveral paſſages; and there is *the Spirit of Jehovah*, *the Spirit Jehovah*, to denote the *third Perſon*, who retains the ſame name in the Chriſtian language.

Though the term *the Name of Jehovah*, is become ſo familiar to our ears in the ſenſe that means only the title or appellation, or, metaphorically, the fame and reputation of any one; yet there are flat texts to ſhew there is more in the matter; and that *perſonality*, as it is called, is aſcribed to this *thing* called *the Name Jehovah*, or *the Name of Jehovah*.

Exod. xxiii. 20. 21. *Jehovah* promiſes to ſend his *Angel* before the people, of whom they are to beware they do not offend him, *for*, ſays *Jehovah*, *my*

my Name is in him. This *Name* ſaid to be in the *Angel* is ſomething more than will tally with any reaſonable acceptation of the word *Name*, unleſs you will ſuppoſe that word *the Name of Jehovah* to mean a *Perſon.*

In like manner, *Pſal.* xx. 1. *The Name of the God of Jacob defend thee*; *Iſai.* xxx. 27. *Behold, the Name of Jehovah cometh from far*; *Zech.* xiv. 9. *In that day Jehovah ſhall be one, and his Name one:* with infinite numbers of paſſages where the *Name of Jehovah* is ſaid to be *placed*, to *dwell*, to *act*, ſhew to a demonſtration, that by the *Name Jehovah*, a *perſon*, and not a title, is meant; and, indeed, that *perſon* by whom the Deity was to be revealed, diſcovered, and made known to mankind.

That there is ſomething very extraordinary in this term *the Name of Jehovah*, and which correſponds ill with the notion of *unity* of the preſent ſet of rebellious *Jews*, is evident from the ſilly fictions they ſet up by which to account for the ſurpriſing uſe made of it. They ſuppoſe ſomething divine to be in the *four letters* of which the word is compoſed; that it is the higheſt crime and profanation to pronounce them, except in the *High-Prieſt*, once a-year, on the day of expiation; and therefore never write, or attempt to pronounce that word, ſubſtituting in all their writings, another word for it, and pronouncing, ſo often as *Jehovah* occurs in the reading of the ſcriptures, the word *Adonai* in place of it. They imagine ſomething ſo ſacred in theſe *letters*, that whoever could pronounce them truly, might work miracles, and controul the power of nature at pleaſure; and they carry their frenzy on this ſubject ſo far, as to account for our Saviour's miracles, by ſaying, that, gaining admiſſion into the temple, he ſtole the name *Jehovah* out of it, rightly

wrote

wrote and *pointed* as it ought to be pronounced and, by being ſo poſſeſſed of that ſecret, by the force thereof wrought his wonders, and might have wrought as many more as he would.

Theſe circumſtances will not prove that the term has the force I have aſcribed to it; but ſurely they will convince any reaſonable man, that there is ſomething very remarkable in the expreſſion, which has puzzled the *Jews* ſo much, and put them to ſuch ridiculous ſhifts to get rid of the force of it.

Beſides the *Name*, there is another term uſed to ſignify a *Perſon*, or *Agent*, in or of the Deity, under the title of *the Word of Jehovah*, or *the Word Jehovah*. This *Word* has many characters of action and perſonality that cannot poſſibly agree to what is ſimple or proper *ſpeech*. *The Word Jehovah*, or *of Jehovah*, came; *the Word* ſpoke; *the Word* acted. *In Jehovah will I praiſe the Word*; *in God the Elohim will I praiſe the Word*. *Jehovah ſent his Word*, &c. And therefore, without ſcruple or heſitation, the Apoſtle St. *John* applies it to the *divine Perſon* that was joined to *Jeſus*, agreeable to the plain ſcope of the *Old Teſtament*, and to even the notions of the *Jews*, of thoſe times; whatever their ſucceſſors, in oppoſition to the Chriſtians, may have, ſince thoſe days, deviſed, to obſcure the light of the antient ſcriptures.

That the antient *Jews*, before their diſputes with the Chriſtians turned their brains, by the *Word of Jehovah* underſtood an active principle, diſtinct from the *firſt Perſon* in *Jehovah*, and alſo called properly *Jehovah*, is beyond contradiction evident from their antient *Targums*, of age, if not equal to the advent of Chriſt, yet framed before their diſputes with the Chriſtians had forced them to coin new and perverſe notions. All the actions

actions of a distinct person are attributed to their *Mimra*, *Jehovah*, *the Word of God*, in many hundred passages; and often, where *Jehovah* only is mentioned in the original, yet where, according to their conceptions, which originally were true ones, *the second Person* is meant, they have, without hesitation, in their *Paraphrases*, translated it *Mimra Jehovah*, or *the Word of Jehovah*; which leaves no doubt that the antients understood the Scriptures, in this important article, as the Apostles did, and as we do.

If the *Targum* of *Onkelos*, which is agreed to be of great antiquity, was published before the Gospel came to be the object of the *Jews* opposition, this argument has all the force already given to it; and if in an age later, it has no less weight, because no one can suppose that complaisance to the *Christians* produced the expressions relied on. And indeed all that suspicion is excluded, and additional force is gained to the reflexion, by considering that *Philo* the *Jew*, who was contemporary with our Saviour, the Ambassador for the *Egyptian Jews* to *Caius Cæsar*, unsuspected of Christianity, probably a stranger to it, suspected of a spirit of accommodation with *Platonick* or pagan notions in his writings, intending to make his notions as plausible and palatable to the learned heathens as possible, cannot divest himself of the notion of making the WORD, his *Logos*, a *Person*, nay, a *divine Person*, of infinite power, nearly allied to the Deity, though with a subordination that he can find no where in the sacred *Book*.

There is still another term, behind, which the *Jews* have much obscured, by confining the meaning to one of the senses which the word bears; it is ANGEL. The *Hebrew* word, from which *Malak* is derived, signifies, *to send*, *to employ*, *to send*

on an errand, to do, or *ſay any thing*: hence *Malak*, in *Greek* rendered ἄγγελος; in *Latin*, promiſcuouſly, *Angelus*, or *Nuncius*; in *Engliſh*, *an Angel*, or *Meſſenger*.

To this word, thus ſignifying, the *Tranſlators*, who originally were *Jews*, and all their ſucceſſors, have given the meaning of what we, in common ſpeech, underſtand by an *Angel*, a CREATED SPIRIT, of which, we are taught to believe, there are immenſe numbers; and, what is worſe, they have confined the ſenſe to that meaning, inſomuch that, when we hear of *the* ANGEL JEHOVAH, we are to underſtand by it ſuch a *created Spirit*.

But it happens unlucky for this conſtruction, that, almoſt always where the ANGEL JEHOVAH is mentioned, there are characters which ſhew that this ANGEL is JEHOVAH: for, either the *Angel* calls himſelf ſo, and ſpeaks in the firſt perſon, as JEHOVAH; or the perſon to whom he is ſent, acknowledges him to be ſuch, and addreſſes him under that deſignation.

Gen. xviii. The THREE that appeared to *Abraham*, in the plains of *Mamre*, who are called ſometimes *Men*, ſometimes *Angels*, are ſaid to be *Jehovah*; *Jehovah* is ſaid to have appeared in that form; HE of the *Three* that talks to *Abraham*, ſpeaks in the firſt perſon, as *Jehovah*, and *Abraham* addreſſes his anſwer to HIM, as to *Jehovah*.

Exod. iii. *The Angel Jehovah*, who appeared to *Moſes* in the burning buſh, ſpeaks from the buſh under the title God, gives himſelf the ſignificant name which we tranſlate, I AM THAT I AM, and is plainly underſtood to be *Jehovah*, *Deut.* xxxiii. 16. *The good will of him that dwelt in the buſh.*

Judg. xiii. *The Angel* that appeared to *Manoah*'s wife, firſt, and then to himſelf, is acknowledged

to

to be *Jehovah*. And every *Angel*, called, *of Jehovah*, that appeared, or ſeemed in viſion to appear, to the Prophets, either ſpeak as *Jehovah*, or are ſpoken to as ſuch.

Exod. xxiii. 20. 21. *The Angel* whom *Jehovah* was to ſend before the *Iſraelites*, and whom he calls *his Angel*, had his NAME in him, and was therefore to be obſerved. And,

Malach. iii. 1. *The Angel* (which we tranſlate *the Meſſenger*) *of the Covenant*, is declared to be *the Lord*; *and the Lord whom ye ſeek, ſhall ſuddenly come to his temple: even the Angel of the Covenant, whom ye delight in.*

The *Malak*, the *Meſſenger*, therefore, *the ſent*, *the Angel Jehovah*, or *of Jehovah*, we ſee, is not always uſed to ſignify a created Being, but, on the contrary, to denote a *Perſon of Jehovah*, of the Deity, ſent as a meſſenger to execute the will of *Jehovah*, of the Deity; and accordingly Chriſt, upon many occaſions, declares that *he is ſent of the Father, and came to do the will of him that ſent him*: which tallies exactly with the language of, and with the ideas given in the *Old Teſtament*.

All theſe terms, the NAME, the WORD, the ANGEL OF JEHOVAH, with ſeveral others of the ſame kind, which evidently ſhew a diſtinction of *Perſons* in *Jehovah*, are, by the characters that attend them, clearly applicable to one and the ſame Perſon, in the Goſpel called the SON, from the ſecond *Pſalm*: *the expreſs image of the Father's perſon, who thought it no robbery to be equal with the Father*; *and by whom, and for whom, the world was made.*

The *Old Teſtament*, in multitudes of texts, mentions a third character, with attributes of action as a diſtinct *Perſon*, *the Spirit of Jehovah*, which is ſaid *to do*, and *direct* many things, almoſt always under that ſpecifick name, and in diſtinction

diſtinction to the other Perſons or characters in the Deity; and the *New Teſtament* formally makes this *Spirit* a diſtinct *Perſon*, acting a proper part in the œconomy of grace to mankind.

When theſe things are duly weighed, men muſt be convinced that the godly, ſerious *Jews*, who ſtudied their Scriptures with attention, and without prepoſſeſſion, muſt have been ſatisfied that there was a diſtinction of *Perſons* in the Deity; and *that the* WORD *Jehovah*, or *of Jehovah*, for example, was diſtinct from the *Spirit*; and both from the *Father*, who ſent the *Word*; and then their ſurpriſe will ceaſe at the freedom and eaſineſs with which Chriſt and his Apoſtles ſpeak of the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Spirit*, as diſtinct *Perſons* of the Deity, as a thing well known and underſtood, without any preamble or apology; whereas, if this had not been a notion commonly received by the intelligent, it is impoſſible that the *Preacher of Salvation* could have made uſe of, or applied it, without having firſt explained it, and ſo prepared the hearers for it.

And, accordingly, we find that, when Chriſt was examined by the Rulers, they did not at all boggle at the doctrine which mentioned *the Son of God*, but aſked him whether he pretended to be ſuch; and, upon his ſaying that he was, concluded him guilty of blaſphemy, without further ceremony: which ſhews that the *Son of God* was a phraſe known and familiar to them, as indeed it muſt be from the ſecond *Pſalm*. And ſurely they could not have entertained an idea of the SON, without alſo admitting an idea of the FATHER, which muſt have made *that term* alſo familiar to them.

So that in this inſtance it is, as in almoſt every other it will, on a careful examination, appear to be, *the New Teſtament* ſpeaks the language of the *Old*;

Old; the principles and the ſentiments are the ſame; and the *New* does little more than explain, and apply, what, by corrupt *Imagination*, through length of time, was obſcured or perverted, and in ſome degree loſt in the *Old*.

The ſame conſideration that makes the knowledge of the TRINITY neceſſary for us, made it ſo to the believing *Jews*, to whom that myſtery was diſcloſed in *the Old Teſtament* in writing; and made it ſo, alſo, to the firſt believers, to whom the mercy of God was diſcovered, whilſt *hieroglyphical* records only were uſed; and therefore it is very reaſonable to expect to meet with ſome footſteps of this diſcovery, ſome *hieroglyphical* repreſentation, in which it was to be recorded.

We ſee the making of molten and graven IMAGES, repreſentations of things in the heavens or in the earth, to be worſhipped and ſerved as gods, was a practice as extenſive, as it was offenſive, in the moſt early times, to the Deity; and as nothing could in itſelf, and conſidered literally, be more abſurd, and leſs deducible from, and conſiſtent with nature and reaſon, than to make any bodily repreſentation of the Deity, and to ſerve and worſhip that figure as divine, it may be pretty ſecurely concluded, that, great as the abuſe was, it was not altogether human invention, but, probably, a notorious abuſe, from the wantonneſs of *Imagination*, of ſome laudable, ſacred INSTITUTION.

The practice is bitterly cenſured, and, under the moſt ſevere penalties, prohibited, in *the Law of Moſes*. No repreſentation at all was to be made of *Jehovah*, nor was there any *Image* of HIM to be met with in the tabernacle, or temple, to whom the people ſhould bow down; contrary to the practice of all the heathen nations.

Yet,

Yet nevertheleſs, both in the tabernacle and temple there were *hieroglyphical* or *emblematical Figures* ſet up over the *Mercy-Seat*, called CHERUBIM; and between, or in them, the Deity was to dwell, or reſide; and to his *Preſence*, in that place, the blood was to be brought in within the *Vail*, on the day of *Expiation*.

Though the form of theſe *Cherubim* was ſo well known in the days of *Moſes*, that, without any other deſcription of them but the name, the workmen being commanded made them; yet the knowledge of the figure they were of, was ſo little enquired after by the *Jews*, when they revolted from God, and receded from the purity of their religion, that they ſeemed totally to have loſt it before they built the ſecond temple. For it appears evidently that they had no *Cherubim* there, from theſe cirumſtances: That *Philo* knew nothing of their form; that *Joſephus*, the learned and inquiſitive prieſt, who lived under the ſecond temple, and had proper occaſion to have known ſomething about them, had any appearance of them been there, owns the ignorance of himſelf and of his nation, acknowledging they knew nothing about them, but that they were *Images* of ſome ſort of *winged Animals*: and the concluſion from this laſt obſervation, and from the utter ſilence of the *Jews*, ſince the days of Chriſt, on that ſubject, is certain; unleſs one will chuſe to ſuppoſe that *Joſephus*, and the other later *Jews*, diſſembled, and concealed their knowledge, leſt ſome advantage might have ariſen to the Chriſtians; which is not probable, becauſe the Chriſtians had not become, ſo early, ſo much the object of the *Jews* jealouſy and averſion, as afterwards they were.

Theſe *Cherubim* were to be beaten out of the ſame piece of gold that covered *the Ark of the Teſtimony*,

Teſtimony, called the *Mercy-Seat*; they were to look inwards towards the *Mercy-Seat*; the blood on the day of *Expiation* was to be ſprinkled on the *Mercy-Seat*, between them; *Jehovah* was to dwell, to reſide, between, or in them; from thence he was to give directions, and reſponſes: and theſe figures with the *Mercy-Seat* and the *Ark*, was all the furniture of the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, the *moſt holy place*, the emblem of the divine reſidence.

As this was the *moſt holy place*, theſe figures, made out of the *Propitiatorium*, the *Mercy-Seat*, were the moſt *ſacred Emblems*, it cannot be doubted they were of very high ſignificancy, by any perſon who knows that the whole knowledge of early times was delivered and recorded in *ſymbols* and *hieroglyphical* repreſentations, and who recollects that every branch of the *Jewiſh* inſtitution was *emblematical*.

And if theſe emblems, rightly underſtood, conveyed knowledge, and directed the ſentiments and the ſervice of the ancient *Iſraelites*, whoſe chief joy was meditation on the *Law* of God, under the firſt temple; we cannot help lamenting the misfortune of the *Jews*, under the ſecond, who ſurely had loſt all the benefits the information by thoſe *ſymbols* could give; and who, certainly, could not bring in the blood on the day of *Expiation* within the *Vail*, and ſprinkle it according to the firſt directions of the *Law*.

If the loſs of the knowledge of thoſe *Emblems* had been fortuitous, occaſioned only by the length of time, between the deſtruction of the firſt, and the building of the ſecond temple, in which all thoſe that knew the form of theſe *Emblems*, in the firſt, had periſhed, the *Jews* caſe would be much to be pitied; but it is by ſo much the leſs a proper object of compaſſion, that abundance of circumſtances ſhew the loſs was owing to their own

own groſs fault, and perverſeneſs; which juſtifies the judgment of *Blindneſs* the Deity has been pleaſed, in purſuance of many denunciations, and even of the COVENANT ſolemnly entered into by their fathers, to execute againſt them.

The firſt Temple was deſtroyed, and the people carried away, becauſe of their rebellion againſt *Jehovah*, and their running after the falſe gods of the nations; and it ſeems pretty certain, that thoſe who forſook *Jehovah*, entirely, would very little mind, or meditate on the ſenſe of the *ſymbols*, or ſervice inſtituted by him; and if any of them returned to their land, it is not very likely they would be ſolicitous about what they knew nothing of.

It is ſurpriſingly remarkable, that, from the promulgation of the *Law* on *Sinai*, till the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* with the firſt temple, the depraved turn of the *Jews*, who followed their own imaginations, was to *Polytheiſm*, quitting *Jehovah* for the fooliſh gods of the nations; and that contrary to the cleareſt evidence, though they had amongſt them the ARK of *Jehovah*, the whole ornaments and liturgy of the Temple, the fire of God burning on their altar, the EPHOD with URIM to direct them, the Prophets inſpired to inſtruct them, and the interpoſition of frequent miracles, to prove *Jehovah* the only, the true God.

And it is equally remarkable, that after their return from the captivity, when all theſe extraordinary pieces of evidence failed, notwithſtanding their many faults and follies, notwithſtanding their return from the captivity, they never once nationally ſwerved from *Jehovah* to the ſervice of the gods of the nations; but, by guarding againſt that error, and the faulty effects of encouraging *Imagination*, they ran into the contrary extreme; becauſe

becauſe of the UNITY of *Jehovah*, they were unwilling to think of the PLURALITY of *Elohim*; and, leſt *Imagination* ſhould carry them too far, they would go no farther than the *Letter* of the *Law*, and the *Exterior* of *Inſtitutions* and ſervices; which, conſidered purely in that light, ſignified nothing, or was apt to miſlead; neglecting the precept ſo often inculcated, and ſo carefully practiſed by the godly, to *obſerve*, to *meditate* on the *Law*, and thereby to diſcover, and comfort themſelves with the merciful and beneficent meaning of it. This turn of mind loſt the knowledge of the *Cherubim*, it prevented their ſeeing the *Meſſias* in *Jeſus*.

As the *Cherubim* are not fully deſcribed in the hiſtory of the framing and building of the tabernacle, or temple; and as the Prieſts, who might have ſeen them in the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, and the other perſons, who muſt have ſeen them on the walls and doors of the temple, might have failed before the ſecond temple, was compleatly finiſhed, which would have furniſhed an excuſe to the ſucceeding *Jews* for being without thoſe emblems in the ſecond temple, and for neglecting the knowledge thereby conveyed, it pleaſed God to exhibit to one of his prophets, *Ezekiel*, in viſion, at different times, the figure of theſe *Emblems*, which he has in two ſeveral places, *chap.* 1. and 10. carefully recorded. And it is not a little ſurpriſing, that, though the *Jews* unanimouſly hold *Ezekiel* to be a prophet, and theſe paſſages to be inſpired, yet they never thought fit to give the *Figures* he deſcribes a place in their temple, or to gueſs at the meaning of them, though they hold that thoſe viſions contain the moſt important myſtery.

The deſcription of the CREATURES, ſeen in this viſion by *Ezekiel*, is ſo full, and ſo anxiouſly, and laborioufly given, that there is no miſtaking ſome of the great lines of it. Each CHERUB had

four

four heads, at leaſt *faces*, and but one *body*; each had *hands* of a man, and *wings*: and the four faces were, firſt, the face of a *Bull*, which is properly called a *Cherub*; ſecondly to the right of the bull, the face of a *Man*; thirdly, to the right of the man, the face of a *Lion*; and the faces of the *Man* and *Lion* are ſaid, *chap.* i. 10. to have been on the right ſide; whereas the face of the *Bull* is ſaid to have been on the left ſide; and fourthly, the face of an *Eagle*, without taking notice of any particular conjunction between the face of the *Bull* and that of the *Eagle*.

And the prophet takes ſo much care to inculcate that the *Creatures*, or *Figures*, thus repreſented, were the CHERUBIM, and that the deſcriptions in the *firſt* and the *tenth Chapters* relate to the ſame *Cherubim*, that there can be no doubt he deſcribes the very *Cherubim* placed in the tabernacle and temple: unleſs it can be ſuppoſed that this deſcription was given, on ſet purpoſe, to deceive and miſlead us.

Knowing thus, from *Ezekiel*, the form of the *Cherubim*, and knowing the uſage of the moſt antient nations, particularly the *Egyptians*, of framing compounded figures of this kind, for *hieroglyphical* or *ſymbolical* purpoſes, from the remains of their antiquities ſtill extant, we can entertain no doubt that this repreſentation was ſignificative. He who cannot believe that the *Cherubim* was ſet in the *Holy of Holies* to repreſent *one* animal, compounded of *Bull*, *Man*, *Lion*, and *Eagle*, muſt neceſſarily admit that the faces of theſe animals, ſo joined, were intended to ſignify ſeveral characters, powers, or perſons, united together in one.

The *Italian Janus* was *bifrons*, ſometimes *quadrifrons*; *Diana* was *triformis*; many *Egyptian* monuments

monuments ſhew *two*, ſometimes *three* heads of different creatures to *one* body; in vaſt numbers of gems, particularly thoſe called *Abraxa*'s, human bodies have the heads, ſometimes of *dogs*, ſometimes of *lions*, ſometimes of *eagles* or *hawks*, &c. and no one can doubt that each of thoſe repreſentations was *ſymbolical*.

In conſidering this ſubject, we muſt recollect, that, though the building of the tabernacle was not ſo early as to give birth to thoſe ſtrange compoſitions over the heathen world, yet this *Figure* was exhibited, immediately, upon the expulſion of man from *Paradiſe*; and was ſo well known, when *Iſrael* left *Egypt*, that the workman made the *Cherubim*, without any other direction than that of making them out of the gold that compoſed the *Mercy-Seat*, and placing them on either end of it, looking towards the *Mercy-Seat*, and ſtretching their *wings* over it. So that the *compound Figures* of the antients, to repreſent their Deities, had no other original but *that* at the eaſt end of the garden of *Eden*.

However the *Emblems*, or repreſentations, of the heathen divinities may have been complicated of the forms of different animals, originally; yet we ſee, with length of time, they ſeparated thoſe *ſymbols*; ſuppoſed the different *Figures*, to be different *Deities*; and at laſt worſhipped them *apart*.

The *Egyptian Apis*, the Bull, in imitation whereof the *Iſraelites* made their *golden Calf*, and *Jeroboam* made his *Calves*, was but one of thoſe figures; and the deity called *Baal* amongſt the *Syrians*, which is alſo called the *Heifer Baal*, was the ſame, and yet was the repreſentation of the great God, *the* LORD *of all*.

The *Perſian Mithras* was, in all the *Devices* of the ſervants of that god, pictured a *Lion*, or with a *Lion's head*; and the *Egyptian Sphinx*, which ſtood at the entry of their temples, had but two of the *cherubical* figures, joined in a ſtrange manner, the head of the *Man* put on the body of the *Lion*.

The *Eagle* was to the *Greeks*, and *Romans*, an emblem ſacred to *Jupiter* or *Jovis*, their great God, whom they pictured like a man. In the talons of this bird they put a thunder-bolt, and this expreſſion of thunder, proceeding from clouds, borne by the *Eagle*, whoſe way in the air is among the clouds, was the enſign of Νεφελληγερέτης Ζεύς: and we know from *Sanchoniathon*, that the *Tyrians* had a pillar ſacred to *Wind*, or *Air* in motion, as well as they had to *Fire*, built, as they ſaid, by *Uſous* the ſon of *Hypſouranias*; which *Fire* and *Wind* they worſhipped as gods.

We know from antient authors, and we ſee in antient gems and other monuments, that the *Egyptians* were very much accuſtomed to make the body of their *Image*, or repreſentation, *human*, ſometimes with the head of a *Lion*, ſometimes with that of a *Hawk*, or *Eagle*, and ſometimes with that of a *Bull*, a *Ram*, or ſome other horned creature.

And as, from the original exhibition of the *Cherubim* renewed, and recalled to its proper uſe, in the tabernacle, and temple, we ſee the antients had a pattern from whence they might have taken thoſe repreſentaions, which they monſtrouſly abuſed, we may reaſonably conclude, that theſe repreſentations which naturally, and without ſome inſtitution, would never have come into the heads of any men, flowed from an early practice, that had a different intent from that to which it was at laſt turned.

And,

And, from the application made by the antient *Pagans* of each of the figures in the *Cherubim*, to ſignify a different Deity, we may with reaſon conclude, that they underſtood *that* particular figure, in the *Cherubim*, which they choſe for their protector or god, repreſented, in the *hieroglyphical* uſage of the early times, the power, the thing, or perſon, that they intended to ſerve.

Thus, for example, if the curled hairs, and horns, in the *Bull*'s head were, in *hieroglyphical* writing, made the emblem of *Fire* in general, or Fire at the orb of the Sun, thoſe who took material fire for their deity, would ſet up that Deity and worſhip it.

If the *Lion*'s piercing eyes, or any other conſideration, brought that animal to be the emblem of *Light* for their god, if any ſuch were, would ſet up the *Lion* for the *Emblem*.

And if the *Eagle*'s ſoaring flight, and commerce thereby with the air, brought that bird to be the emblem of *Air*, ſuch as imagined a divinity in the *Air*, in *Clouds*, in *Winds*, would take that bird to repreſent their deity.

And the HUMAN FIGURE in the *Cherubim* muſt, one ſhould think, be the moſt natural occaſion of that univerſal miſtake which all the heathens, at length, dropped into, of picturing their gods with *human bodies*, and the very earlieſt gave ſome countenance to, in joining parts of the *human body* to, almoſt, all their repreſentations of their gods.

Now, ſo it is, that we do know from innumerable texts of Scripture, and from many paſſages in antient hiſtorians, and *Mythologiſts*, that the objects of the earlieſt pagan adoration, after loſing the idea of the true God, were the *Powers* in the *Heavens*, that were ſuppoſed to maintain this ſyſtem; the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, the *Hoſt of*

Heaven, the *Queen of Heaven*; *Fire*, which was ſuppoſed to be one of the chief agents, in ſupporting the motion of the univerſe; *Light*, iſſuing from *Fire*; and the *Air*, *Clouds*, *Winds*, &c. which had infinite force, and were ſuppoſed to act a very conſiderable part in the government and preſervation of the material world.

In particular we know, that *Fire* at the orb of the Sun was worſhipped by the antient *Egyptians*, who made uſe of *Apis*, the *Bull*, for their *Emblem*; and that the worſhippers of *Baal*, the *Heifer*, believed their god had the command of *Fire*: for, in the remarkable contention between *Jehovah* and *Baal*, managed on the one ſide by *Elijah*, on the part of *Jehovah*, and on the other by four hundred and fifty *Prieſts*, on the part of *Baal*, the teſt of all was, which of their Deities could command *Fire* to come down from heaven to conſume the ſacrifice; and the iſſue diſgraced *Baal*, and deſtroyed all his *Prieſts*. And therefore, it is no raſh concluſion, that the *Ox*'s or *Bull*'s head, was the *hieroglyphical Emblem* of *Fire*, perhaps *Fire* at the orb of the Sun.

We know, alſo, that many of the *Egyptians* and of the neighbouring nations worſhipped *Light*; it was difficult to ſeparate the idea of light from that of fire. Thoſe that ſerved the moon and planets had not fire for their object. The *Perſians*, who worſhipped fire, and eminently the body of the Sun, had *Light*, neceſſarily, in eſteem, their beneficent principle. *Oromaſdes* was *Light*. *Job* talked of worſhipping *Light* as idolatry. There were ſeveral temples in *Egypt*, and in *Canaan*, to the *Light* of the Sun; and in *Egypt*, as well as in *Perſia*, the *Lion* was a ſacred *Emblem*. Wherefore, it ſeems highly probable the *Lion* was uſed as the *Symbol* or *Emblem* of *Light*, as the *Bull* was made uſe of as the *Emblem* of *Fire*.

We

We know alſo, that the earlieſt heathens took the *Air*, *Wind*, that thing which in the antient languages is expreſſed by a word ſignifying, promiſcuouſly, *Wind* and *Spirit*, that inviſible agent which we feel, and which performs ſo many conſiderable effects in nature without being ſeen, for a Deity; that to it they aſcribed inſpiration; their *Sybils*, their deliverers of Oracles were *inflated*, futurities, the will of their God was diſcovered, by the countenance of *Clouds*, and the *flight of Birds*, which were religiouſly obſerved by *Augurs*, in the *Hebrew*, *Cloud-mongers*; Thunder was the voice of their God, which was portentous, and much obſerved; Thunder was aſcribed to the great *Jove*, the *Thunderer*, and the *Eagle* with the thunderbolt was his enſign. Whence we may, pretty ſafely, conclude, that the *Eagle*, to the worſhippers, of the *Air*, repreſented, *hieroglyphically*, *Air*, *Wind*, *Spirit*.

If the Deity, to give ſome idea of himſelf from a ſenſible object, had made choice of the *Heavens* as the ſenſible object, from which to take the imperfect idea of his immenſity, *perſonality*, and manner of exiſtence and operation; if by the vaſtneſs of them his immenſity was to be repreſented; if, by *fire*, the *firſt Perſon*, neceſſary and continually generating and ſending forth *Light*, the *ſecond Perſon*, and conſtantly and neceſſarily ſupplied by *Air*, or *Spirit*, the *third Perſon*, the *Trinity* co-exiſting, and co-operating, for the ſupport of the whole, and in aid of each other, was to be repreſented: then, upon diſcovering this to mankind, the *Heavens* would become the type of *Jehovah*, the divine *Eſſence*; *Fire* would become the type of the *firſt Perſon*; *Light*, of the *ſecond*; and *Air* or *Spirit*, of the *third*: and whatever EMBLEMS, in *hieroglyphical* writing, were uſed to expreſs theſe, as the *names* of the

one, would, or might be uſed, for the appellations or *names* of the other.

So that, if this reſemblance, or repreſentation, were to be expreſſed in ſtone, wood or metal, the emblems of *Fire*, *Light*, and *Air*, or *Spirit*, that is, from what has been ſaid, the *Bull*, the *Lion*, and the *Eagle*, ought to be conjoined together into the form of *one animal*; and every body, who underſtood the *hieroglyphical* emblems, would immediately think on the *Heavens* which they repreſented, and, from thence, raiſe to himſelf the intended image of the *Trinity* in the divine *Eſſence*.

Now we do know that the word SHEMIM, uſed always for the *Heavens*, in the ſacred language which God has choſen to expreſs his *Revelation* in, is plural, as the other word ELOHIM is; that its natural ſignification is *Names*; and that it has been often made uſe of to ſignify the Deity. And if the *Characters*, or *Powers*, in the *Heavens* have been choſen to point out, and expreſs the *Perſons* in the Deity, we can perceive the reaſon why the *Heavens* have got the appellation of *the Names*, by way of eminence, as they denote, or are deſcriptive of theſe *ſacred Perſons*.

And we do, further, know, that the firſt turn the antient heathens took from the worſhip of the true, the inviſible God, was to the worſhip of the *Heavens*, thoſe *Names*; which can, pretty naturally, be accounted for if they were accuſtomed to think on the *Powers*, or *Characters*, in the *Heavens* with any ſacred regard, and to believe, that they ſupported themſelves, and all the reſt of this ſyſtem, by one unerring, perpetual action and reaction upon themſelves, and on every thing elſe in the material world.

This

This defection from the knowledge and ſervice of the true God began as early as the project at *Babel*. The ſcheme, then, was, to build a tower or temple to the *Heavens*: and the deſign was then broken, by making the projectors fall out amongſt themſelves about the LITURGY, and form of *Worſhip*, which was confounding their language; yet it ſoon took place, in different families, and countries, tho' with different emblems, ceremonies, and ſervices. *Abraham*, by the direction of God, left *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, where the rebellious ſervice, probably to the *Light*, had begun; and was, as were his ſon and grandchild, after him, for many years, kept under the immediate direction of God, itinerant in regions, that were then but thinly peopled, and with the inhabitants whereof they had but ſmall intercourſe to prevent the infection that might have come from communication with idolaters; and, by the immediate act of providence, his race was brought down to *Egypt*, and exceedingly multiplied there, under particular manners, and inſtitutions, that kept them diſtinct from the people of that great empire; which, as it was one of the firſt mighty monarchies, ſo was confeſſedly the moſt noted for the learning, and ſuperſtitious profeſſion, of the Pagan religion: and choſen therefore by the Deity as the ſcene in which his wonders were to be wrought, for the confuſion of idolatrous *imagination*, and for eſtabliſhing the authority of himſelf, his Lawgiver, and conſequently his *Laws*, with the *Iſraelitiſh* people.

As ſubſtituting the viſible ſimilitude in the room of the inviſible God was the firſt, it was the moſt criminal, the moſt dangerous abuſe that ever crept into religion; and therefore the ſtrongeſt, the moſt laborious efforts, if one may be allowed to ſay ſo, were made by the Deity to correct, and

prevent it; and to ſet men right in that particular. *Reaſonings* of any kind, could not have had the ſame weight to convince the idolatrous *Egyptians*, of their error, and to guard *Iſrael* againſt falling into it.

And, accordingly, we ſee the point, principally, laboured in the writings left by *Moſes*, is aſſerting to *Jehovah* the power, pre-eminence, and dominion, attributed by the Pagans to the *Heavens*. Hence his books begin with the creation, and formation of thoſe *Heavens* by the word of God; the hiſtory of the deſtruction of the earth, by the flood, is minutely recorded; the conſtant claim of the Deity is to be confeſſed as the Creator of the *Heavens* and the *Earth*, and the giver of all the good things that were to come, immediately, from them. The chief view of the *Law* of the *two Tables*, is to deny ſervice to all beings but *Jehovah*; the profeſſions of the faithful were, *that Jehovah* made the *Heavens*; was the ſovereign Lord and Maſter; and in thoſe profeſſions, the miracles in *Egypt*, *&c.* are referred to as the foundation of their belief and acknowledgment.

It calls for very particular attention, that the firſt, and the grand miſtakes in religion proceeded from taking *literally*, what was meant *figuratively*, or emblematically only; and ſo denying, in effect, the *ſymbolical* meaning; from which ſeveral impious abſurdities followed, terminating in abſolute infidelity, where ſome ſort of impertinent belief was not maintained by extravagant *Imaginations*.

The ridicule of this miſtake appears very ſtrong, in taking *ſymbolical* repreſentations for the *Realities* intended to be repreſented; whatever pretence a *Revelation*, recorded in words by writing, might have to be ſo, *literally*, underſtood, ſure it was extremely perverſe, to take *pictures* only, for the

the *original* things or perſons deſigned to be exhibited by the *pictures*.

And yet this folly we ſee mankind fell into almoſt in every particular. The *Elohim* were repreſented by the *Heavens*, and theſe, again, in *Sculpture*, or *Picture*, by the *Bull*, the *Lion*, and the *Eagle* joined. The firſt who wandered from the truth, miſtook the *Heavens*, *Fire*, *Light*, and *Air*, or *Spirit*, for what they were intended to repreſent, the inviſible *Trinity*; and as ſuch worſhipped them, uſing the figures of the *Bull*, the *Lion*, the *Eagle*, only as *hieroglyphical* repreſentations of thoſe *Powers*, which they truly were intended to be. But their ſucceſſors, in proceſs of time, forgetting the ſuppoſed influence of thoſe *Powers* in the *Heavens*, and obſerving religious ſervice paid to the forms of thoſe *animals*, made a ſecond miſtake; looked no more to the *Heavens* as their Gods, but ſtupidly imagined a Deity to be inherent in thoſe graven or molten *Images* which they worſhipped and ſerved, and from whom they looked for favour, and protection: and when thoſe things became too abſurd to be credited, and formally defended, *Imagination* was ſet to work, and produced ſuch ridiculous ſyſtems in reſpect to the Deity, as endangered the loſing of the knowledge, even of the *original Symbols*, and helped to introduce total Unbelief and *Atheiſm*.

It was taking *Symbols* for *Realities* that made men imagine a purifying quality in the blood of beaſts; that made them fancy that *Hecatombs* ſlaughtered placated the Deity; and that God was delighted with the ſmoke that aroſe from the fat of burnt-offerings.

It was laying hold of the *letter*, and letting the meaning ſlip, that induced men to ſacrifice their *firſt-born*, and to ſhed in ſacrifice human blood: the blood of the *firſt-born* was to atone; the *ſeed of*

the woman was to relieve mankind from miſery; the firſt-born were ſacred to God. Zealots to the *letter* imagined the *fruit*, at leaſt the *firſt-fruits*, of the womb had this virtue; and therefore offered it, *literally*, to their gods; which, at laſt, made human ſacrifice faſhionable.

In ſhort, looking at the external ſymbols, and *letter*, and not at the apparent, certain meaning of both, drove the heathens to all their follies; and firſt miſled, and afterwards hardened and confirmed the *Jews* in thoſe abſurdities, under which they are ridiculous, and miſerable, to this day.

As the practice of the earlieſt heathens, who firſt apoſtatiſed to the ſervice of the *Heavens*, in ſetting up the figures of the ſeveral *animals*, whereof the *Cherubim* was compoſed, for the ſymbols, or emblems, of the different *Powers* in the *Heavens*, which they worſhipped, is ſtrong evidence what thoſe *figures* were, originally, intended to repreſent; it becomes neceſſary for one, who would have further ſatisfaction in this particular, to ſearch the ſcriptures, to ſee whether, in the ſeveral appearances of the Deity therein related, there may not be ſome characters fit to confirm, or deſtroy the opinion that the *figures* in the *Cherubim* were the emblems of *fire*, *light*, and *air*, or *ſpirit*.

And, upon due inquiry, it will be found, that, almoſt, always when the manner of *Jehovah*'s appearance is deſcribed, the viſible *ſymbol* of his *preſence* was *fire*, or *light*, or *air*, or all three together: not to mention that the appearance of *fire* is generally, and, almoſt, neceſſarily attended with that of *light*.

The firſt appearance deſcribed is *Gen.* xv. where to confirm the *covenant* to *Abraham*, the parts of the divided beaſts, and the fowls, being ſet over againſt

againſt each other, the appearance of a ſmoking furnace, and a lamp of *fire*, paſſed between them. That this appearance contained *fire*, *light*, and *air*, or *ſpirit*, is evident.

The ſecond appearance of which the form is mentioned, was under the oaks of *Mamre*, *Gen.* xviii. where the figure is not particularly deſcribed, though probably it was human, or like to it; and all we can gather from this, is, that the appearance was under the form of *three Perſons*.

The next appearance deſcribed is that to *Moſes*, in the buſh, *Exod.* iii.; what was exhibited to view, was a burning buſh which was not conſumed; and this exhibition could not poſſibly be without *light*; whether it was attended with cloud, or ſmoke, the text does not ſay.

The next *emblem* of the *preſence* of God, deſcribed, is the *pillar of fire, and cloud*, that guided and guarded the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs; if *light* be allowed to the *fire*, in this exhibition, all the three are joined.

Immediately after this we ſee *Jehovah* giving the *Law*, ſolemnly, from *Sinai*. He is ſaid, *Exod.* xix. 18. *to have deſcended upon it in fire:* Mount *Sinai* was altogether on a ſmoke; it was covered with a thick cloud, and there were on it thunders and lightnings; and *Moſes* takes notice, *Deut.* iv. 15. in cautioning the *Iſraelites* againſt graven images, and the making the ſimilitudes of any creatures, to be worſhipped as God, that on the day that *Jehovah* ſpoke to them in *Horeb*, out of the midſt of the *fire*, they ſaw no manner of *ſimilitude:* by which, the text ſhews, muſt be meant the ſimilitude of any *animal*; beſides, that it is certain there muſt have been the appearance of *fire*, and *light* from it, as well as from the lightning, and the *cloud*, which, naturally, denotes *air*, or *ſpirit*, whoſe peculiar language thunder is.

When

When the tabernacle of the congregation was removed, and pitched without the camp, upon the people's rebellion whilſt *Moſes* tarried yet in *Horeb*, the *pillar of Cloud* deſcended, and ſtood at the door of the tabernacle, ſo often as the Lord talked with *Moſes*; and all the people, upon ſeeing this cloud, worſhipped. *Exod.* xxxiii. 9. 10.

When *Moſes* deſired to ſee *the way of the Lord*, and *Jehovah* was to proclaim his *name*, he cauſed his *glory* to paſs by him, *Exod.* xxxiii. 22. Now, if this *glory* of the Lord was of the ſame kind with that which filled the tabernacle, and temple, on many occaſions, and which *Ezekiel*, in his account of the *Cherubim*, deſcribes, it muſt have conſiſted of *fire*, *light*, and *air*, or *ſpirit*.

When the tabernacle was ſet up, *Exod.* xl. 34. 35. the *cloud* of the Lord covered the tent, and the *glory* of *Jehovah* filled the tabernacle. When *Aaron* bleſſed the people, for the firſt time, upon entering upon his office, *Levit.* ix. 23. the *glory* of *Jehovah* appeared to all the people. When the temple was compleated, and the ſacred muſick had played, 1 *Kings* viii. 10. 11. and 2 *Chron.* v. 13. 14. the *cloud* filled the houſe of *Jehovah*, *ſo that the Prieſts could not ſtand to miniſter, by reaſon of the cloud: for the glory of Jehovah had filled the houſe of Jehovah.* And, 2 *Chron.* vii. 2. when *Solomon* had done praying, at the dedication of the temple, the glory of the Lord filled the houſe. *And the Prieſts could not enter into the houſe of Jehovah, becauſe the glory of Jehovah had filled Jehovah's houſe.*

Now, if we examine what appearance this *glory of Jehovah* had, when he was, as one may ſay, in *perſon*, taking poſſeſſion of his houſe, and can with certainty diſcover it, we may with confidence conclude, that the *ſenſible image* it bore, was what God intended ſhould give the idea of the material thing

thing, to which *he*, whoſe *preſence* that appearance denoted, was to be aſſimilated.

The common notion of *glory* has ſplendor, a glare of light attending it; and, when brought into ſculpture, or painting, is figured like rays iſſuing from the ſun; and, in the paſſages above mentioned, a *cloud*, another *emblem*, was attendant.

In *Ezekiel*, *chap.* 1. where the *Church* is deſcribed, the *glory of Jehovah* is alſo ſtrongly painted. The viſion begins with a *whirlwind*, a *great cloud*, *v.* 4. and *a fire infolding itſelf*. *v.* 13. *As for the likeneſs of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures, and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning*. *v.* 26. 27. 28. The appearance of a *Man*, on the appearance of a *throne*; and the prophet ſaw, *as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it*: from the appearance of his loins even upwards, and from the appearance of his loins even downwards, he ſaw *as it were the appearance of fire*; *and it had brightneſs round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, ſo was the appearance of the brightneſs round about. This*, ſays the prophet, *was the appearance of the likeneſs of the glory of the Lord: and*, when he ſaw it, *he fell down upon his face*. And *chap.* 10. *v.* 4. where the ſame *Cherubim* are deſcribed, *the court* is ſaid to have been *full of the brightneſs of Jehovah's glory*, whilſt *the houſe was filled with the cloud*.

This deſcription ſhews that *fire*, *light*, and *cloud*, were the principal, if not the only ingredients in the appearance of *the glory of Jehovah*; and *the* preternatural appearance of *light*, ſhining from the ſkin of *Moſes*'s face, after *the glory of Jehovah* had paſſed by him, ſhews pretty well, what ſhare *light* had

had in the compoſition of that *glory*; which the Apoſtle *Paul* ſeems to have underſtood, when writing to *the Hebrews*, *chap.* 1. he ſpeaks *of the brightneſs of the Father's glory, the expreſs image of his Perſon.*

Beſides theſe appearances of *the glory of the Lord*, *Jehovah* acts in character, when, *Levit.* ix. 23. 24. pleaſed with the prieſthood of *Aaron*, he ſends *fire*, the emblem of himſelf, out from his *face*, to burn the ſacrifice on the altar; when, 2 *Chron.* vii. 1. *fire*, upon the ending of *Solomon*'s prayer, came down from heaven, and conſumed the burnt-offering; and when, 1 *Kings* xviii. 38. the deciſion was made, as above mentioned, between *Jehovah* and *Baal*, by *fire from heaven.*

Theſe being, perpetually, the ſignals of *Jehovah*'s *preſence*, the *ſymbols* made uſe of to denote his appearance; theſe having been, jointly, or ſeverally, the objects of the earlieſt Pagans religious ſervices, the Pagans acknowledging the *bull*, the *lion*, and the *eagle*, as the *emblems* of theſe their divinities, which, in length of time, they miſtook for what they were intended only to repreſent; and the *bull*, the *lion*, and the *eagle*, joined in the appearance of *one living creature*, having been conſecrated, as one may ſay, in the *Cherubim*, for the reſidence of the *preſence* of God in the *Holy of Holies*, one can hardly doubt that the *figures*, joined in the *Cherubim*, which were the *emblems* of *fire*, *light*, and *air*, or *ſpirit*, the ordinary ſimilitude under which the Deity uſually appeared, were intended to repreſent thoſe *characters*, or *perſons*, in the divine *Eſſence*, that *fire*, *light*, and *air*, or *ſpirit*, reſembled.

Whatever occaſion man might have had for the knowledge of the diſtinction of *perſons* in the Deity, before the FALL; yet it ſeems certain, the manner of his ſalvation, after his defection, could not have been

been imparted to him without revealing *that* truth, undiſcoverable by the *light of nature*. He could not poſſibly know, how, or upon what account, his ſins were to be pardoned, and himſelf reinſtated in the favour of God, without being told, that the Deity conſiſts of *three Perſons*; that of thoſe *three*, purſuant to a *covenant* made before the CREATION, the *ſecond* was to take on him fleſh, and in the form of a man to ſuffer, and thereby atone for the ſins of mankind; and that the *third* was to keep a communication with the ſouls of men, for their guidance and comfort. And man could not poſſibly keep up, with any certainty, the memory of this *Revelation*, without ſome memorial, ſome *ſymbolical* act, or thing, to preſerve it; or look upon ſuch *ſymbol*, knowing the ſenſe of it, without gratefully confeſſing his obligations to thoſe *divine Perſons*, to whom he owed his being, his comfort, his ſalvation.

A *Chriſtian*, the moſt important article of whoſe *Creed* it is, that the Deity was joined to the humanity, that the *Word* was made fleſh, that a *Perſon* in *Jehovah* became *the Son of Man*, and a Man, born of a Virgin, became *the Son of Jehovah*, will not ſcruple when he is told, that, in the repreſentation of the Deity exhibited under *ſymbols* in the *Cherubim*, for the inſtruction and comfort of mankind, the figure of a *Man* is added to thoſe that repreſent the *Trinity*; that this figure of a *Man* is placed at the right hand of that *emblem* that repreſents the *Father*, the *firſt Perſon*, the *Fire*; and that it is, in a particular manner, conjoined with the *Lion*, the *ſecond Perſon*, the *Light*. He firmly believes what theſe *figures*, thus explained, repreſent; and muſt think it agreeable to the great condeſcenſion, and goodneſs of the merciful God, to acquaint man, from the beginning, with what

ſo

ſo nearly concerned him, and what, without *Revelation*, he could poſſibly have no idea of.

The *hieroglyphical* repreſentation in the *Cherubim* muſt not be conſidered, ſingly, from the form of it; but to that muſt be added the rank it had in the tabernacle, and the ceremony, or *emblematical* action in which it was concerned.

It has been already obſerved, that the *Cherubim* were to be made out of the ſame pure gold that compoſed the *mercy-ſeat*, which they were to cover with their wings; and all that is deſcribed to us, further, of their poſture, is, that, ſtanding one at each end of the *mercy-ſeat*, their faces were to look towards each other, and towards the *mercy-ſeat*.

This *mercy-ſeat*, the ſpace between the two *Cherubim*, is deſcribed, particularly, as the place of the reſidence of the Deity, and of his appearance; he was to inhabit the *Cherubim*, or between them; and he was to appear, there, in the *cloud*, and to declare his will from thence.

Beſides this, there was a ſtated ſolemn ceremony to be performed, once a year, on the day of *Expiation*, before the *mercy-ſeat*: the *Prieſt* was to bring within the *vail* the blood of the *ſin-offering*, and with it to make atonement for all the people, by ſprinkling of the blood upon the *mercy-ſeat*, and ſeven times before it; and this blood, ſo ſprinkled, is ſaid to expiate.

The *atoning blood*, in this higheſt act of the *Moſaical* inſtitution, was ſprinkled on that place, the *mercy-ſeat*, towards which the ſeveral faces of the *Cherubim* were turned: and, if they were to ſee, they had no object to look at, on this ſolemn day of *expiation*, but the *Prieſt* in the holy garment, the *emblem* of the *ſecond Perſon, the Light*, ſprinkling this blood on, and towards, the *mercy-ſeat*; which could hardly fail to raiſe the idea, that the

the blood, ſo ſprinkled, was the object, the divine *Perſons*, whom theſe *figures* repreſented, looked upon as the propitiation, the ranſom, the atonement.

And, if it was neceſſary, towards making this *emblem* compleat, to repreſent all the *Perſons* as looking upon, and accepting this blood, then it became neceſſary to make two ſeveral *Cherubs*, and to place them at different ends of the *mercy ſeat*, that the face of each *figure* might be turned towards the ſpot the blood was to be ſprinkled on; becauſe, had there been no more than one *Cherub*, two only of the four faces could have been directed to the place on which the blood was to be ſprinkled; beſides that the ſignificancy of the circumſtance of their faces looking towards each other, which deſerves a ſeparate conſideration, would have been loſt.

Nothing is more certain, than that, under the *Moſaick* œconomy, the Deity was to reſide, to dwell, to appear, in the midſt of the people, in the place where he was to put his *Name*; the place where, and where only, in excluſion of all others, ſacrifice was to be offered, the altar was to be ſet up, and every other ceremonial, or emblematical act of their religion was to be performed, and more particularly the higheſt, in, or between the *Cherubim*.

Whatever religious act was done, in this place, is ſaid to be done *before Jehovah*; in the *Hebrew*, always, *before the faces of Jehovah*.

Now, if the ſeveral faces of the *Cherubim* are taken to repreſent the *Perſons* in the Deity, and therefore to be called *the faces of Jehovah*, the reaſon of this phraſeology will be obvious, as the phraſe itſelf will be ſignificant.

It is not to be diſſembled, that the *Hebrew* words, tranſlated *before the faces*, are often made uſe

uſe of to ſignify *before*, or *in preſence of*, without regard to plurality of faces; but it deſerves inquiry, how ſo ſtrange a phraſeology came to take place.

And it ſeems to call for very particular attention, that, before the *Moſaick* inſtitution, and, indeed, from the firſt *Revelation*, the preſence of the Deity is repreſented as confined, with reſpect to religious acts, to a place; and what is done, in that place, is ſaid to be done *before the faces of Jehovah*.

Cain is ſaid to have gone out from *the faces of Jehovah*, and to have dwelt in the land of *Nod*, to the eaſtward of *Eden*. Now, if by *the faces of Jehovah* is not meant ſome particular place of his immediate preſence, and if, on the contrary, his preſence, as we tranſlate it, in general, is underſtood, the thing will not be true: *Cain* could not convey himſelf out of the preſence of God, which is every where; but he might remove from *that place* which he choſe, in a particular manner, for his reſidence, in the celebration of religious acts.

In like manner, *the pot of manna*, *Exod.* xvi. is ordered to be laid up, and was accordingly laid up, *before the faces of Jehovah*, before the *Teſtimony*, long before the *Moſaick* tabernacle and ark was made, or erected. Laying it up any where, would, in one ſenſe, have been laying it up *before the Lord*; but *Aaron* underſtood the meaning of the expreſſion to be, to lay it up before the *Teſtimony*, where the faces of the *Cherubim* were.

Nor need any one ſcruple admitting the force of this laſt obſervation; for it is evident from this, as well as other texts, that the *Iſraelites* had an *ark*, and a *tabernacle*, conſecrated to the reſidence of *Jehovah*, and deſtined to religious ſervice, before the *Moſaick tabernacle* was reared up.

Upon the provocation of the *Iſraelites*, in making the golden calf, *Jehovah* being highly diſpleaſed,

pleaſed, the *tabernacle* was by *Moſes* taken out of the center, and removed far from the camp, and was called *the tabernacle of the congregation*, where *Jehovah* deſcended in a *cloud*, to give directions to *Moſes*. Now this happened in the interval, between *Moſes*'s receiving inſtructions for building the *tabernacle* that was made in the wilderneſs, and his giving orders for the contribution for that work; which evidences that the *Iſraelites* had, upon their going out of *Egypt*, a tabernacle for *Jehovah*, diſtinguiſhed by his preſence, and the *ſymbols* of it, before that reared by *Moſes* was prepared.

Though the having a tabernacle for *Jehovah*, ſufficiently implies the having an *ark*, with the *mercy-ſeat* and *Cherubim*, the furniture of it; yet there is other evidence to ſhew that the *Iſraelites* actually had an *ark*, different from that made by *Moſes*. For when the *ark*, which had been taken by the *Philiſtines*, was locally at *Kirjath-jearim*, *Saul*, being at *Gibeah* of *Benjamin*, 1 *Sam.* xiv. 18. orders *Abijah* to bring him thither the *ark* of God; and the penman of that book adds a remark, for at that time there was an ark of God, beſides that, with the children of *Iſrael*. And when the *ark* made by *Moſes*, after having been carried from *Kirjath-jearim*, was lodged in *Zion*, *Uriah*, who had left *Joab* at the ſiege of *Rabbah*, being preſſed to go to his houſe and to his wife, excuſes himſelf, alledging it was not proper for him to take ſo much eaſe, when the *Ark*, and *Iſrael*, and *Judah* abode in tents, and *Joab*, and the King's ſervants were incamped in the open fields. 2 *Sam.* xi. 11.

And it ſeems highly probable, that the *Ark* thus brought to *Saul* when in camp, and the *Ark* that was with *Joab* at the ſiege of *Rabbah*, was the ſame that belonged to the *tabernacle* which the *Iſraelites* carried from *Egypt* with them; becauſe, after the building

building of *Moſes*'s tabernacle, it was unlawful to have made any new one in imitation of it.

If it is aſked, whence the *Iſraelites* had an *ark*, a *tabernacle*, *Cherubim*, and the preſence, or the ſuppoſed preſence, of *Jehovah*, in, or between, thoſe *Cherubim?* toward the reſolution of that queſtion, it muſt be conſidered, whence the antient nations had their *Ciſtæ*, their *Arks*, their *Images*, their *Teraphim*, their *Tabernacles*, their *Temples*; becauſe the origin of both will, very probably, be found the ſame.

The account given us by *Moſes*, of the publication of the *Goſpel*, after the *Fall*, is very ſhort, and conciſe, though the *Revelation* may, in itſelf, have been very full and explicit. Hopes of mercy given are recorded in that ſingle ſentence, *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent:* and we hear of no other *ſymbolical* thing, inſtitution, or exhibition, except only the placing, or inhabiting, the *Cherubim*, to the eaſtward of *Eden*, upon man's being removed out of it.

The *Jews*, who have miſconſtrued the *Angel Jehovah* into a *created* angel, have thought fit, here, to underſtand, by the *Cherubims*, two of the ſame ſort of Angels, who had got a flaming ſword, amongſt them, to frighten *Adam* from re-entering *Eden*, and meddling with the fruit of the *tree of life*; and this monſtrous ſtory they made out of a text that, neceſſarily, means no ſuch thing, and may fairly be conſtrued to a ſenſe big with the moſt important information to mankind.

For, in the firſt place, what the *Jews* and we tranſlate *to keep the way of the tree of life*, with intent to prevent the coming at it, may as properly be rendered *to obſerve*, or *for obſerving*, and ſo diſcovering, or finding out, *the way to the tree of life*; and every body knows that the word *way of heaven*,

heaven, *way to life*, in the *Greek*, as well as *Hebrew* learning, means to arrive at happineſs.

In the next place, what we commonly tranſlate *flaming ſword* ſtands in two ſeveral *Nouns*, not joined by conſtruction, *flame* and *ſword*, which laſt means nothing more particular than a killing weapon.

And, in the laſt place, the word we tranſlate *placed Cherubims*, is, almoſt always, in every other text tranſlated *inhabited*; and whether you tranſlate it *placed*, or *inhabited*, the next word ought to be tranſlated *the Cherubims*, as things or *emblems* well known to thoſe for whom *Moſes* wrote. So that *Jehovah*'s *placing* or *inhabiting* theſe *Cherubims*, where there was alſo the appearance of *fire* and *ſword*, was the method, choſen by him, to make *the way to the tree of life kept, or obſerved.*

Now, as the eſtabliſhed method for atonement and propitiation, the known *way to the tree of life*, was, by employing *fire* in burnt ſacrifice, and the *ſword* in ſhedding blood, both which muſt be done before *the faces of Jehovah*, reſiding in or between the *Cherubim*; what hinders us to conclude, that the exhibition mentioned by *Moſes* was, to the *ſymbolical* inſtitution and ſervice afterwards eſtabliſhed amongſt men, the ſame that the patterns ſhewed to *Moſes* and to *David* were of the tabernacle and temple that afterwards were erected; and that *Adam*, and in him mankind, was thereby inſtructed to ſhed Blood, and offer burnt-ſacrifice, before *the faces* of ſuch *ſymbolical* figures as were then repreſented? Surely, if the ſhedding of blood, and offering by *fire*, were then inſtituted, as we are pretty ſure they were, the manner would alſo be directed. And, as we know, from the hiſtory of *Cain*, that *Jehovah* choſe a place for his more immediate *preſence*, called his *faces*, we cannot poſſibly doubt that directions

tions muſt be given with what *ſymbols* that place was to be adorned, and how it was to be diſtinguiſhed: nor can we reaſonably heſitate to pronounce that the *ſymbol* of his *preſence* was the *Cherubim*, the place where, in the *Jewiſh* œconomy, he moſt certainly dwelt, and where, in the very text in queſtion, he is ſaid to inhabit.

If then this *emblematical* repreſentation was exhibited, immediately after the *Fall*, to expreſs and keep in perpetual memory the *Revelation* of mercy to man, by the blood and ſuffering of that perfect human ſacrifice, who was to be joined to the *ſecond Perſon* in the Deity, and to redeem and govern thoſe that ſerved, and truſted in him, we can clearly ſee the extent of God's goodneſs from the beginning, univerſally, to all mankind; and we can perceive how the *Jews* came to have a tabernacle, and an ark, with proper *emblems*, before that made by *Moſes*; and how the *Nations* came by their *ſymbols*, of the like nature; which in proceſs of time they miſtook, miſapplied, and altered, when their corruption and *imagination* had once led them aſtray.

For if, in that *emblematical* ſervice, the *ſymbol* of the *preſence* of the Deity was neceſſary, towards performing ſacrifice, as well as *the emblem* of the great ſacrifice, the great *interceſſor*, &c. then it became neceſſary for men, when, by multiplying, they were forced to extend their quarters, and to people diſtant regions, to carry ſome *ſymbol* of the divine *preſence* along with them, in order to the ſacrificing acceptably; every nation, agreeing in the ſame ſervice, muſt have one; and every family, ſo long as the right of exerciſing the prieſthood remained with the firſt born, muſt alſo have one, elſe that right would be of no benefit; and if they lived in the itinerant, *No-made* way, they muſt have a tent, or tabernacle, for placing thoſe

ſymbols

ſymbols in, as well as means of tranſporting them; as, on the other hand, if their ſeats were fixed, ſo as to ſuffer them to erect houſes for themſelves, they naturally would find houſes, temples, for thoſe *ſymbols*.

Nothing was more common than *Houſhold-Gods* among the antients. *Laban* had his *Teraphim*, which he calls his Gods, and about which he was extremely ſolicitous; *Rachel* had no leſs reſpect for them than he. The Heathens carried their Gods along with them, whitherſoever they went. The idolatrous *Iſraelites* had, probably, in the wilderneſs tabernacles for their Gods *Chiun* and *Remphan*. The cauſe of making the golden Calf was, probably, compliance with this cuſtom. *Æneas* is commended for the pious care of carrying his Gods, his *Dii Penates*, from *Troy* to *Italy*; though what the form of them was, is not known. Every family had their *Penates*, their *Dii Lares*, though in later times they forgot what form theſe antiently were of. *Teraphim*, *Penates*, *Lares*, are all plural names for the repreſentations of thoſe *Family-Gods*; and, laying thoſe circumſtances together, it is impoſſible to doubt that the making theſe repreſentations, amongſt the different nations and kindreds, owed its origin to one and the ſame cauſe.

It was becauſe of the many corruptions introduced into the ſacred ſervice, in practice as well as in opinion; that the *Jewiſh* œconomy was inſtituted; and it was becauſe the permiſſion of every head of a family to be *Prieſt*, for his own houſe, and to ſacrifice according to his own will, had introduced the greateſt uncertainty, as well as error, that the firſt act towards eſtabliſhing the *Jewiſh* liturgy was, the abrogating that right, the depriving the *firſt-born* of all pretence to ſhed blood,

blood, and transferring that right to the family of *Aaron*.

It was for the ſame reaſon, and to the ſame intent, that ſacrifice of all ſorts was prohibited, except before *the faces of Jehovah*, in the tabernacle firſt, and then in the temple. In the wilderneſs no *Iſraelite* could lawfully kill a clean animal, for private uſe, in any other place, except before the tabernacle: and though, when the people had fixed ſeats in the land of *Canaan*, diſtant from the *faces of Jehovah*, they were permitted to kill of the flocks, or of the herds, for domeſtick uſe, provided they did not eat the blood or the fat; yet ſtill, under the ſtricteſt menaces, they were prohibited to ſacrifice, for fear of the abuſes that might enſue.

The very prohibition, together with ſubſtituting the *Levites* in place of *the firſt-born*, and the change that was thereby introduced in the precedent practice, which all mankind but the *Jews* continued in, ſhews ſufficiently what was lawful and regular before that prohibition; and the circumſtances, above taken notice of, ſufficiently ſhew the occaſion and meaning of it.

Much of the ſame kind, and nearly for the ſame reaſon, is the prohibition to make *graven* or *molten images* to repreſent *Jehovah*, to fall down before them, or worſhip them; to erect altars, ſtatues, or pillars, for religious ſervice. *Abraham*, *&c.* built altars; *Jacob* anointed a ſtone, which he had ſet up, and called it *Beth-el*; and doubtleſs the practice of both was laudable, and, but for the prohibition in *the inſtitution* given by *Moſes*, each might have been lawfully practiſed by the *Iſraelites* in *Canaan*, as well as their ſacrificing *before the faces of Jehovah* might have been imitated. But, after all religious ſervice, the whole *ſymbolical* repreſentation of the grace of God

God to mankind, was confined to the tabernacle and temple, then what was lawful to be done elsewhere, became unlawful; and, as it was thus impossible, after that period, to sacrifice any where but before *the faces of Jehovah*, *the symbols of his presence*, in *the holy place*, it became unfit to make, or to have in reverence, those *symbols* (which were only expressive, as they were joined with sacrifice) any where else, except when a Prophet had immediate direction, or in cases of necessity.

The prohibition, then, is to *Israel*, that they should not make unto themselves *graven images*, the *similitudes* of any thing in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, *&c.*; that they should not bow down to them, nor serve them; that they should not take upon themselves, wantonly, to assimilate God to what their *imaginations* might suggest to them he was like, by the practice whereof mankind had already run into so many ridiculous, and miserable errors. But this prohibition does not, in any degree, imply, that the Deity might not continue the use of the sacred *symbol* of his *personality* and grace, in the merciful act of redeeming mankind, in *the Holy of Holies*; no more than the inhibition to sacrifice, at large, prevented sacrificing in the temple. And, if it be said, that the actual institution of sacrifice, at the altar, shews the prohibition to sacrifice was not absolute, it may also be said, that the command to frame the *Cherubim* is as express as that to burn *Holocausts* at the altar.

It is, indeed, true, that the prohibition extends to prohibit all religious *worship*, even to the sacred *emblems* in *the holy place*; an extravagance into which the idolaters had fallen; and that may be a main motive for forbidding the very making, or having, such *emblems* in private hands. But

then there was no danger of that abuſe in the temple: The *ſymbols* were placed there, not as the objects of *worſhip*, but as deſcriptive, in ſome degree, of the manner of *the act of grace*, as it was to be brought about by the *perſons* in the Deity, for mankind. The *preſence*, that was to be worſhipped, was to be looked for between thoſe *ſymbols*, or *emblems*, upon the *mercy-ſeat*; and the *cloud*, and the *glory* iſſuing from it, called away the attention from thoſe repreſentations. Beſides that, to prevent abuſes from *imagination*, and all attempts of *worſhipping*, theſe ſacred *figures* were kept in the innermoſt part of the tabernacle, and temple, to be approached only once a-year, and that by the *High-Prieſt*, on the day of *expiation*.

That this was the apprehenſion of the *Iſraelites*, of thoſe times, is evident from the conduct of their ſucceſſors, who could not well fail to be acquainted with their notions; and who might think, that ordinances of this kind, intended to take place in a ſtate of quiet and tranquility, when all the people had free acceſs to the tabernacle, or temple, might be ſuperſeded, in caſe of abſolute neceſſity, when the pious could not have acceſs to preſent themſelves at thoſe places.

Micah, who lived in the time of the *Judges*, certainly feared *Jehovah*: the ſilver, belonging to his mother, was dedicated to *Jehovah*, to make an *Ephod*, and *Teraphim*, *&c.* when he ſucceeded in getting a *Prieſt* to his mind, he concluded that he was certain *Jehovah* would do him good; and this *Ephod*, and *Teraphim*, evidently were prophetick.

His ſcheme, then, manifeſtly was not to revolt from *Jehovah*, nor to ſerve idols, or other Gods; but, whilſt the confuſion and oppreſſion of *Iſrael* made it impoſſible to attend at *Shilo*, to have *a houſe*

houſe of God in his own family, with ſacred *ſymbols*, and a *Prieſt*, who, *before the faces of Jehovah*, in that place could make atonement by ſacrifice, whilſt communication with *Shilo* was obſtructed.

He, therefore, made an *Ephod*, and *Teraphim*, in imitation of the approved *ſymbols*; and, having them ſet up, had, *Judg.* xvii. 5. *Beth-Elohim*, *a houſe of God*. The *Tranſlators*, imagining that the *Teraphim* repreſented falſe gods, have rendered the words *Beth-Elohim* a houſe of gods; though, *chap.* xviii. 31. they render the very ſame words, when applied to the tabernacle in *Shilo*, *the houſe of God*.

As the ſervice, for which this *Ephod*, and *Teraphim*, this *houſe of God*, was intended, could not be performed without a *Prieſt*, *Micah*, who it ſeems was not himſelf a *firſt-born*, conſecrated one of his ſons, probably the eldeſt, for that office, for want of one more fit; but meeting, at laſt, with a *Levite*, he engaged him to ſerve in that ſtation, and conſecrated him, in full belief that this action would be acceptable to *Jehovah*.

And, accordingly, we ſee *Jehovah* was propitious to this pious, though irregular deſign. The *Ephod*, and *Teraphim*, conſulted by the *Danites* about the ſucceſs of their undertaking, returned a true anſwer; which ſo far raiſed the eſteem of the *Danites* for thoſe ſacred *ſymbols*, that they robbed *Micah* of them, and ſet them up in their own country; where they continued in reputation till the Captivity.

Micah, complaining of the injury done him in taking from him the *Teraphim*, ſays they had taken away his *Elohim*, his God. It is difficult, if at all poſſible, to imagine that *Micah*, who ſet up thoſe figures to do ſervice to *Jehovah*, could

have meant any more than that the *Teraphim* were the *Symbol*, or repreſentation, of the *Elohim*, neceſſary to be uſed in the chief act of religious ſervice; and, if that ſhall be the conſtruction, the reſemblance between *Teraphim* in private ſervice, before the *Moſaick Law*, and *Cherubim* in the publick ſervice, after it, is pretty obſervable.

It was, in all appearance, for the ſame reaſon, and to the ſame end, that *Gideon*, a ſervant of the true God, who had ſeen *the Angel Jehovah*, to whom *Jehovah* had ſpoken, to whom and by whom *Jehovah* had wrought wonders, made an *Ephod* of the golden ſpoils of the *Midianites*, and ſet it up in *Ophrah*, his city; whither the *Iſraelites*, in proceſs of time, ran a whoring after it, and where it became a ſnare to *Gideon*, and to his houſe.

That this *Ephod* had *Teraphim*, and all the appurtenances, as *Micah*'s had, attending upon it, is not to be doubted; and it is remarkable, that *Gideon*'s act is not cenſured for any inherent malignity in it, but only for the conſequences of it; as the *Ephod* he ſet up, in proceſs of time, debauched the people, and became a ſnare to him, and to his houſe.

Theſe inſtances, pretty plainly, ſhew, that *Teraphim* were no more than a copy of the original *Cherubim*, applied to the ſame uſes that the *Cherubim* were on *the Mercy-ſeat:* and as all mankind agree, from many clear proofs, that the *Teraphim* were images, or repreſentations, of what the antients took to be expreſſive of their Deity, it can hardly be queſtioned that the *Cherubims* were intended for the ſame purpoſe.

Suppoſing this to have been the caſe; as the very exhibition muſt have been intended to repreſent *Trinity* in the Deity, and the ſhare each *Perſon*

ſon had in the ſalvation of man, it is impoſſible the *Jews* could have rejected the belief of the *Trinity*, and with it the *Meſſiah* upon his *advent*, ſo long as they retained the memory, and the underſtanding, of that *hieroglyphical* repreſentation. But, as it was fixed in Providence that they ſhould diſbelieve the one, and reject the other, their wild *imaginations*, whilſt the figures remained in the temple, led them to neglect all reflexion upon them, and to run after falſe gods; and this neceſſary piece of knowledge, towards underſtanding the ſyſtem of grace, dropt ſo totally out of their heads, or rather they had framed notions ſo contrary to it, that, upon their return from the captivity, the Ark and *Cherubim* had no room in their temple; though theſe were the very *kernel* of all their religious ceremonies; and tho' the knowledge of the figures of the *Cherubim* was preſerved by *Ezekiel*, a Prophet allowed by themſelves to be inſpired, as the dimenſions and fabrick of the *mercy-ſeat* was by *Moſes*.

That the ſhutting up thoſe figures in the *Sanctum Sanctorum* might have contributed to the loſs of the knowledge of their form, amongſt the *Jews*, may be true; but then, if they had not been deſcribed by *Ezekiel*, that loſs would have been total, and irreparable; and we, as well as they, ſhould be deprived of the benefit of that repreſentation, to evidence the original and permanent deſign of the merciful Deity: But as the loſs of the ideas, which ought to have reſulted from that repreſentation, anſwered the end of God in the hardneſs of the *Jews*; ſo the preſervation of thoſe ſacred *figures*, by *Ezekiel*, ſerves to convict the *Jews* of that hardneſs, to render them inexcuſable for their infidelity, and at the ſame time, to confirm and illuſtrate the faith of *Chriſtians*.

The form and the meaning of the repreſentation in the *Cherubim*, is not the only piece of uſeful knowledge the *Jews*, to whoſe cuſtody *the ſacred oracles* were committed, have loſt as to themſelves; though, in preſerving *the ſacred books*, they have providentially ſaved them for the benefit and inſtruction of thoſe who were called, to be the people of God, in their ſtead.

It has been already obſerved, that there is a particular emphaſis, which the *Jews* will not ſee, in the plural *Elohim*, uſed always in ſcripture to ſignify God; and it is unconteſtable, that the word itſelf carries ſome idea in it deſcriptive of ſome character, ſome relation, the *Being* deſcribed bears to Man.

The word *Jehovah* the *Septuagint* tranſlates Κύριος, and we, after it, *Lord*; becauſe of the delicacy of the original interpreters, who might think it ſome ſort of profanation to tranſlate that ſacred word, and make it common in its known meaning. Neither *Jew* or *Chriſtian* doubts that *Jehovah* expreſſes *the eſſence that neceſſarily exiſts*; and every body knows that it does not mean what Κύριος properly ſignifies: the *Greek* word is a faithful and juſt tranſlation of *Adoni*, which the ſuperſtitious *Jews* have placed in the room of *Jehovah*; it ſignifies *Dominus*, *Lord*, *Maſter*, but carries nothing in it of the idea of the *Original*.

The idea reſulting from the word Κύριος, *Lord*, is relative, and bears a particular regard to *ſubjects*, *ſervants*, without which the idea of *Lord* cannot ſubſiſt; but the idea ariſing from the word *Jehovah* is abſolute, bearing no relation to any thing but itſelf, and ſtanding fixed and determined by itſelf, ſubſiſting though nothing beſides did exiſt.

And,

And, therefore, we can reaſonably ſay, *my Lord*, *thy Lord*, *his Lord*, *our Lord*, *their Lord*, *the Lord of the land*, *&c.* and thoſe expreſſions are often uſed in ſcripture; but we cannot ſay, *my Jehovah*, *thy Jehovah*, *&c.* and in fact there is no ſuch expreſſion in the whole ſacred book: and, when we tranſlate, *my Lord*, *thy Lord*, *&c.* the word tranſlated is never *Jehovah*, but always *Adoni*, or ſome other word of the ſame ſignification.

As we diſcover the idea conveyed by *Jehovah* to be abſolute, ſo we perceive the idea implied in *Elohim* to be relative, by the uſe of it: nothing is more common than *my*, *thy*, *our*, *their*, *his*, *Elohim*, which never is ſaid of *Jehovah*; and, as the word has ſome ſignification of relation, the *tranſlators* ought to have expreſſed it by a word that bore ſome ſuch ſenſe.

But, as they have erred in rendering the abſolute word *Jehovah* by the word *Lord*, which carries an idea ſignificant of relation: ſo they have erred, on the other hand, by rendering the word *Elohim* Θεὸς, Θεὸι, *God*, *Gods*; which, ſo far as we know by the derivation aſſigned for it, has nothing ſignificant in it, at leaſt carries no idea of relation to us, or to any other thing.

If the word Θεὸς, or the word *God*, have no ſignificant meaning in themſelves, and are made uſe of, as ſounds only to raiſe the idea of the eternal Being; then the applying that word by the relatives, *my*, *thy*, *&c.* is improper; the eternal *Being*, abſolutely conſidered, has no more relation to one, than to another: and, if the term Θεὸς had originally any ſignification of relation, by all we can diſcover from the *Greek* antiquities, it was loſt long before the *Septuagint* tranſlation; nor do we know what the preciſe meaning of the *Saxon* word

God was, other than to denote the ſupreme beneficent Being.

The *Jews*, therefore, ought to have tranſlated the word *Jehovah* by a word of the ſame ſignification; or at leaſt to have rendered it *totidem literis*, if they could not find a word of the ſame import; and they ought not to have tranſlated it by a word that has another and a different meaning: and they ought not to have tranſlated *Elohim*, which moſt certainly had a ſignification of relation, by a word which had no ſignification at all of relation affixed to it; on the contrary, they ought to have kept up, in the tranſlation, to the true meaning of the word; or to have retained the *Hebrew* term, *totidem literis*, in the tranſlation, as they did in proper names; for then, though they muſt have left men in the dark, they would not have miſled them, nor done the miſchief they have done to their ſucceſſors.

Without inquiring whether the loſs, or the concealing of the meaning of this word, proceeded from folly, or faultineſs, or from a mixture of both, in the *Jews*, it is highly neceſſary to ſearch, in order to the recovery of it; knowing the genius of the *Hebrew* language to be ſuch, that ſignificant words are framed from roots that yield ſome certain, fixed idea, and thereby convey a determined meaning.

In looking over the *radical* words of the *Hebrew* language, one finds the root *Elah* to mean an *Oath*, or *Adjuration*, the *Execration* made to affect the breaker of a *covenant*; and the genius of the language certainly admits the word *Elah* to be uſed, from that, to ſignify *a perſon that hath taken upon him this oath*, and *Elohim* to denote more *perſons* become ſubject to it, or entering into *covenant*, or agreement, together.

That

That *Elohim* ſhould be formed, from this *root*, to ſignify *perſons under the obligation or execration of an oath*, may ſeem, at firſt ſight, ſomewhat hard; but that notion will become more familiar, when one conſiders that *Jehovah*, throughout the ſacred ſcriptures, is ſaid on many occaſions, in confirmation of any promiſe, or *covenant*, relating to a future event, *to ſwear*, *to ſwear by himſelf*, *to ſwear as Jehovah liveth*, in order to create abſolute certainty, and reliance on the performance.

Why *Jehovah* is thus repreſented as taking an *oath*, and what the nature and manner of that *oath* may be, merits a diſtinct conſideration; but ſince, in fact, he repreſents himſelf to us in that light, as binding his promiſes by *oath*, we may eaſily conceive why he may chuſe to be called, and conſidered, as *the God bound by oath*, the *Being* ſolemnly engaged under an immutable obligation, by thoſe who are to believe in, and rely on his promiſes.

Though we have no footſtep, ſo far as I know, left of this ſignification, in the terms which the *Greeks*, or *Romans* or other later heathens, made uſe of to ſignify the Deity; yet the *Greeks* had their *Jupiter* Ὁρκιος, and the *Romans* their *Jupiter Fœderator*; and nothing was more common, amongſt thoſe heathens, than the notion that the ſupreme God could bind himſelf by *oath*; nay they deſcribe, with fictitious circumſtances, the particular *oath* that was immutable. Here, again, is an inſtance of a very extraordinary notion, very far from being deducible from *the light of nature*, pick'd up, and maintained univerſally, amongſt the moſt antient nations we know; which tallies wonderfully with what the ſacred *book*, of which they knew nothing, exhibits; and muſt therefore have flowed from the ſame original.

If we admit that *Elohim* carries the notion of *Fœderatores*, *Beings* or *Perſons* in *Alliance*, bound by *oath* to make their engagement effectual, then we evidently ſee why they may, are, and ought to be, called, *my*, *our*, *their*, *&c. Elohim*; why *Jehovah* deſcribes himſelf by the title of the *Elohim of Abraham*, *of Iſaac*, *of Jacob*, *of Iſrael*; why they call upon him as *their Elohim*; why, in their praiſes, they aſcribe to their *Elohim* power, goodneſs, faithfulneſs, beyond the *Elohim* of other nations; and why the leading encouragement to the *Iſraelites*, to do well, is, that *Jehovah* is, or will be, *their Elohim*, and they are, or ſhall be, to him a *peculiar people*; as, on the other hand, if they broke their *covenant*, the *Elah*, the *oath* of *execration* would reach them.

And, ſurely if *Jehovah* was pleaſed to make, or to repreſent himſelf as making a *covenant* for the benefit of mankind, or of any particular people, by which he was unalterably bound to redeem and to preſerve them, on their performing certain conditions, the moſt kind, and at the ſame time, the moſt uſeful appellation he could chuſe to be addreſſed to by, is that of *Elohim*, in the notion of *Fœderator*; becauſe it could not be pronounced, with attention, without raiſing the moſt thankful ſentiments of the mercy and goodneſs of God, joined to the ſtrongeſt confidence in his favour; and, at the ſame time, warning the party of the danger of tranſgreſſing, by non-compliance with the conditions to which he, on his part, was bound.

If *Elohim* was a term peculiar to *Jehovah*, as God of *Iſrael*, with whom he plainly appears to have been in *covenant*, the reaſon of that appellation would be pretty obvious; but ſo it happens, that he is called *the Elohim of the whole Earth*;

performed

and, in the deſcription of the Creation, the works performed by the *Eternal* are ſaid to be done by the *Elohim*, and all the antient nations admitted the term *Elohim* as deſcriptive of their God. So that it will be a ſtrong objection againſt this ſenſe of the word *Elohim*, if no reaſonable account can be given of an earlier *covenant* than that with *Abraham*, and if that *covenant* did not extend to all mankind.

Whoever believes that there are *three perſons* in the Deity, whereof *one* became bound to join himſelf to humanity, and perform compleat righteouſneſs, and give compleat ſatisfaction for the ſins of mankind; *one* became bound to aſſiſt man, thus redeemed, to his duty, and to reform his heart; and *one* became bound to accept of this ſatisfaction, and, upon receiving it, to admit man to fellowſhip and favour; will not ſcruple to allow, that, before even the creation, a *covenant*, or agreement was made to this purpoſe between the ſacred *three*, in the event of man's *falling*: and he will be the leſs ſcrupulous to admit this, when he conſiders ſeveral texts that ſuppoſe it; particularly the 110 *Pſalm*, *v.* 4. which ſays, *Jehovah hath ſworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Prieſt for ever, after the order of Melchizedeck.*

But, whatever may be thought of this; as none, who conſiders and believes the ſcriptures, can doubt that this *covenant* was made known to the firſt man, on the *fall*; if that term *Elohim* was conſecrated for his information and comfort, it would paſs current amongſt all mankind, his deſcendents; and that would ſufficiently authoriſe *Moſes*, in deſcribing the creation, to make uſe of the term *Elohim*, aſcribing to *Jehovah*, the *Elohim* upon whoſe fidelity all mankind

kind were to depend for ſalvation, the creation of this ſyſtem, and of man.

And though *Moſes* does not, formally, relate that *Jehovah* acquainted man immediately upon the *fall*, of a *covenant* made for his ſalvation; yet ſeveral paſſages, as recorded by him, ſhew that mankind had early knowledge of this *covenant*. For, in ſpeaking to *Noah*, both before and after the flood, *Jehovah* ſays he will eſtabliſh his *covenant* with *Noah*, and with his ſeed; not uſing the word that is, commonly, tranſlated *to make a covenant*, which would have been done if no *covenant* had been made before; but making choice of an expreſſion that preſuppoſed a *covenant*, formerly made, and known to be made to *Noah*, who was made ſure he was to reap, after that declaration, the benefit of it.

And if one enters into the belief that this *covenant* (which gave birth to the appellation *Elohim*) was made by the *Elohim*, from the beginning, and was intimated to mankind, upon the *fall*, when the purpoſe of mercy was firſt revealed; and when, for explaining and recording that purpoſe of grace, the whole *emblematical Inſtitution* was appointed, and the *Cherubim* were exhibited; he will readily admit, that the poſition of the two *Cherubs*, with their faces looking towards each other, and at the *mercy-ſeat*, where the blood for atonement was to be ſprinkled, might repreſent the *Elohim*, as parties in the act for making a *covenant*, looking and relying on each other for the performance, and regarding the blood, which was the *emblem* of the conſideration for which man was to be redeemed: and this opinion he will the more readily give into, when he recollects that the ark, which ſupported the *Mercy Seat* and the *Cherubim*, the principal emblems

emblems of the *Jewiſh* religion, is moſt commonly called *the Ark of the Covenant*.

As the *Jews* cannot be pardoned the loſing the ſenſe of the word *Elohim*, they can hardly be forgiven their plain endeavour to hide the original meaning of the word, tranſlated, *covenant*.

That *Berith*, the word ſo tranſlated, does not, in its original ſenſe, ſignify *covenant*, is evident from this; that the formal phraſe made uſe of to ſignify *the making a covevant* is, preciſely, *to cut off*, or *ſlay*, *Berith*; much in the ſame way as *icere*, *percutere*, *ferire*, *fœdus*, is, amongſt the *Romans*, to ſignify *the making a covenant*.

Berith, therefore, in its original ſignification, denotes ſomething that was to be *cut off*, to be *ſlain*: and *Moſes*, *Exod.* xxix. 8. after having, as the *ſymbol* of the *covenant* concluded between *Jehovah* and the People, divided the blood of the ſacrifice into two equal parts, and after having ſprinkled the one half on the people, ſaying, *Behold the blood of Berith, which Jehovah hath cut off with you, concerning all theſe words.* And, *Zech.* ix. 11. priſoners are ſet free by *the blood of the covenant, Berith.*

The Latin *Literati* very truly aſſign the riſe of the phraſe *ferire fœdus*, when they ſay, that in all leagues, covenants, and agreements, it was the antient and original cuſtom to ſlay ſome victim, to ſacrifice; whence mentioning the ſolemn act, the ſlaying the victim in common uſage, came to ſignify the whole act of making a league, to which it was applied: but they fail in aſſigning an adequate reaſon for the ceremony of ſlaying any animal, at treaties; which again muſt have given riſe to the form of ſpeech in queſtion.

It has been already obſerved, that the blood of the *Redeemer*, who, in due time, *was to be cut off*,

off, was the conſideration of the original *covenant* the *Elohim*, and between them and man; and the cutting off, and ſprinkling the blood of a *type*, a creature ſubſtituted in the room of the *Redeemer*, till his real *advent*, was the *Symbol* of that *Covenant*, uſed, even by *Jehovah*, in making *Covenants* with men, as in the inſtance at *Sinai*; and, therefore uſed by all men when they entered into ſolemn agreements with each other. *Cutting off a creature*, then, in a particular manner, or under a particular character, being the *ſymbol* of that important *covenant*, it is no wonder that men, in their ſolemn engagements with each other, ſhould make uſe of that ſacred act; and that ſaying, ſhortly, that ſuch *creature*, by ſuch name or character, was *cut off*, ſhould in common uſage, ſignify that a *covenant was made.*

Though theſe reflexions may give ſome reaſonable ſatisfaction why *cutting off*, or *ſlaying, a victim* was uſed in making *covenants*; yet it is ſtill neceſſary to inquire what particular character the thing, called *Berith*, bore to diſtinguiſh it from common victims in ordinary ſacrifices, and to appropriate it to the uſe of *binding covenants*; ſince there is no appearance, after the moſt accurate ſearch, that *Berith* was the name of any ſort of animal uſed in ſacrifice.

In examining carefully the *Old Teſtament*, two paſſages, and no more, are to be met with where the *Jews* have not ventured to tranſlate the word *Berith*, *covenant*, but have been neceſſarily obliged by the context to give it its true, original ſignification; though, to divert the reader's attention, and to prevent his making any inferences from the ſenſe of the word, in theſe texts, they have, in an arbitrary manner, *pointed* the letters ſo as to make the ſame letters, which in every other paſſage, ſound

ſound *Berith*, to be in theſe texts pronounced *Borith*.

Mal. iii. 2. The Angel of the covenant, of *Berith*, is ſaid to be like the refiner's fire, and like fuller's *Berith*, ſoap, and comes to purge and to purify. And,

Jer. ii. 22. Reproaching *Iſrael* for their wickedneſs and uncleanneſs, *Jehovah* ſaith, *For though thou waſh thee with nitre, and take theemuch* Berith, *ſoap; yet thine iniquity is marked before me.*

Theſe paſſages, evidently, ſhew, that the *Berith* has in it the notion of cleanſing, purifying; and the *root* from which, in that ſenſe, it muſt riſe, is *Bar*, *Barar*, which ſignifies *pure*, *to purify*; and the word *Berith*, formed from that *root*, may ſignify properly *purification*, a *purifier*, a perſon or thing fit to *purify*.

Keeping in view this notion of the word, and recollecting that every thing was, under the *Law*, even the moſt holy things, to be cleanſed, to be expiated, to be ſanctified, by blood; that the pollutions of mankind were to be waſhed away by it; and that the blood, which thus cleanſed, was but *typical* only of the blood of the real *purfier*, who, in the *New Teſtament* language, is *to waſh us in his blood from all our iniquities:* who can help concluding, that the great ſacrifice to be *cut off*, in due time, was called *Berith*, *the purifier*, to ſignify the end of ſhedding his blood; that the repreſentative beaſts *the types*, were called by the ſame name; that to *ſlay*, or *cut off*, *Berith*, or the beaſt repreſenting *Berith*, *the purifier*, being the very ſign, or *ſymbol*, of the great, the original *covenant* for the ſalvation of mankind, which was to be repeated for confirmation of ſolemn *covenants* amongſt men, the term or expreſſion of *cutting off Berith*, or the *purifier*, came in proceſs of time to ſignify the act to which, amongſt men, it was applied, the *making a cove-*

a covenant; the word *Berith* retaining, nevertheleſs, its original ſignification, and being to be taken in that ſenſe, when the ſcope of the text requires it ſhould?

Underſtanding the matter thus, many paſſages, that otherwiſe are extremely obſcure, if at all ſenſe, become clear and ſignificant. *Iſa.* xlii. 6. *I Jehovah will give thee for a Berith, covenant, of the people, and for a light of the Gentiles.* xlix. 8. *I Jehovah will give thee for a Berith, covenant, of the people, to eſtabliſh the earth.* If what is tranſlated *covenant*, were rendered, as it ought to be, *purifier*, nothing could be more clear and comfortable than thoſe texts.

Upon the ſame principle the blood of *Berith*, the *covenant*, will ſignify the blood of the *purifier*, without excluding the notion of that blood being the *ſeal*, and *ſymbol*, of the *covenant*.

And, in like manner, in many paſſages where *Jehovah*, inſtead of uſing the word, tranſlated *to make a covenant*, uſes other words, which ſignify, *eſtabliſhing*, *giving*, *placing*, *his Berith*, *covenant*, to, or with, any one, the word *Berith* may more properly mean *the purifier*, than the *covenant*.

Gen. vi. 18. When *Jehovah* acquaints *Noah* that he is to deſtroy the earth, with all its inhabitants, he aſſures him, at the ſame time, that he is to eſtabliſh his *Berith* with him, and his family. Now, if *Berith* be taken, in that place, for the *purifier*, the promiſe amounts to this, that *the great purifier* was to come of his *Line*; which happened accordingly.

In the ſame way, *Gen.* xvii. 2. *Jehovah* ſays to *Abraham, I will give my Berith between thee and me.* And *v.* 4. *As for me, behold my Berith, covenant, is with thee.* And, if by *Berith*, in thoſe expreſſions, is meant the *purifier*, then theſe are formal declarations that the *Meſſiah* was to come of *Abraham*; which

which explains the other declarations, *that in his ſeed all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed.*

And that declaration in which *David* ſo much exults, in what is called *his laſt words*, 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 5. *yet he hath placed with me an*, or *the everlaſting Berith*, will ſignify that *Jehovah* had decreed *the purifier*, *the Meſſiah*, ſhould ſpring out of his houſe, though his houſe was not ſo right with God as he could have wiſhed it.

Many more paſſages will appear in a very different light, from what they did formerly, upon taking the word in this ſenſe; which may be the reaſon why the *Jews*, who miſtook the true *Berith*, when he came in accompliſhment of the *Law*, and the *Prophets*, have uſed much ſkill to hide the true meaning; which moſt undoubtedly was underſtood by their forefathers, after the death of *Gideon*, when, *Judg.* viii. 33. they went a whoring after *Baalim*, and made *Baal Berith* their God, to whom there was a houſe, or temple, at *Shechem*, *chap.* 9. under the title of *El Berith*, or *the God Berith.*

Whether the *Iſraelites* or the *Canaanites* built this temple, is not material; the *God* was, ſurely of the manufacture of *Canaan*, who ſpoke the ſame language with the *Jews*, and expected *purification* as well as they, though perhaps after a ſtrange manner. *Baal*, or *El*, *berith*, tranſlated *the Lord*, or *God*, *the covenant*, will hardly make ſenſe; but the *Lord*, or *God*, *the purifier*, might be a proper object of worſhip, for thoſe who were ſo fond of *purification*, as to cauſe their children to paſs through the fire to purifie them, and even to ſacrifice their children, by fire, to atone for crimes, and avert wrath.

Having ſaid ſo much for explaining the *Hebrew* phraſe for *making a covenant*, it may not be improper

proper to inquire a little into the origin of the *Latin* phraſe *ferire*, *icere*, *percutere*, *fœdus*, which evidently is of the ſame kindred.

Waving the conjecture of the Grammarians, that *fœdus* might, in the old *Tuſcan* language, have been uſed for *hœdus*, a kid, which again might be the animal accuſtomed to be ſlain, or cut off at concluding treaties; becauſe it neither appears that *hœdus* was antiently written *fœdus*, nor that a kid was the regular ſacrifice: I think it moſt probable that *fœdus*, in the phraſe in queſtion, meant originally what the adjective *fœdus-a-um*, means, at this day, *vile*, *abominable*, *polluted*.

Now, it is certain that in the *Hebrew* language the ſacrifice gained its name, from the end for which it was offered; a *ſin-offering* is called, briefly, *Sin*; a *treſpaſs-offering*, a *Treſpaſs*; wherefore the *victim*, brought *for a ſin-offering*, is called, without any addition, *a Sin*. Hence a man is directed to bring *his ſin*, if a creature, the *type* of that *Perſon* who was to ſtand in the place of the ſinner, to the door of the tabernacle, to lay his hand upon the head of his *Sin*; the *Prieſt* is to kill the *Sin*, to pour out the *blood of the Sin*, *&c.* without adding at all the word *offering*, to explain the meaning.

As, then, all religious rites flowed from the ſame ſource, and were inſtituted in the ſame language, it is very natural to conclude, that, upon the formation of a new language, the expreſſions concerning thoſe ſacred rites would be framed in ſome conformity to the original language. Now, if, in the firſt language, that which was offered for *ſin*, which was to atone for it, and to purge it away, was, by thoſe who expected that effect from it, called *ſin*; why may not we believe, that what was offered to purge what was termed *fedity*, *pollution*, *abomination*, might be called *fœdus*, if *fœdus* in the language

guage of the country, ſignified *fedity*, *pollution*, *uncleanneſs*?

And, if it is allowed that *fœdus* might ſignify *the creature* offered to atone for ſin, or uncleanneſs, then *ferire*, *percutere*, *fœdus*, would be the very *act* of offering for *ſin*, and muſt come to ſignify *making a covenant*, in the very ſame way that *cutting off*, or *ſlaying*, *Berith* doęs.

To theſe obſervations, which tend to ſhew the antiquity, and authority, of *Revelation*, and the true end and meaning of the *emblematical*, and *predictive inſtitutions*, as well as of the terms in which *the written will of God* is conveyed, many more might be added; and theſe, already offered, might be ſupported by producing the paſſages from Authors ſacred, and prophane, by which they are to be vouched: But as, on the one hand, this would exceed the deſign of theſe ſheets; ſo, on the other, it would be but doing, over again, what is already infinitely better done by the ingenious Mr. HUTCHINSON, author of *Moſes's Principia*, in that and his other ſurpriſing works, from whence all the thoughts concerning the antiquity of, and manner of interpreting *Revelation* are borrowed, and which are fraughted with *diſcoveries*, as uſeful as they are new.

This *Author* has been complained of for writing in a manner that has been called abſtruſe and dark, and, perhaps, with ſome reaſon; but, if he is not altogether to be acquitted from that charge, ſure there is no excuſe for thoſe, who, pretending to admit *Revelation* as *Divine*, will not give themſelves the trouble to examine, with due attention, his *Works*, which make *the Old Teſtament* ſpeak a language underſtood by our *Saviour* and his *Apoſtles*, and which hardly any body appears to have underſtood ſince their days. It is ſcarce poſſible

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to pay too dear, in labour, and ſtudy, for ſuch diſcoveries; and, if regard for *Revelation* were out of the queſtion, it is amazing that curioſity does not prevail with men of *leiſure*, and *learning*, to look into books that are ſtored with ſo much entertainment in *that* way.

If any unprejudiced perſon, acquainted with the Scriptures, who has looked into the antient heathen learning, ſhall examine, with tolerable care, thoſe thoughts; it is to be hoped, he will find a ready anſwer to all the productions of *modern*, as well as *antient*, *Infidels*; and remain, to his great comfort, ſatisfied, *That Chriſtianity is, indeed very near, as old as the Creation.*

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